
M Y B O Y H O O D
I N A P A R S O N A G E



T.W.L. IN HIS LAST YEAR AT PREPARATORY SCHOOL

MY BOYHOOD IN A PARSONAGE

*Some Brief Sketches of American Life
Toward the Close of the Last Century*

By THOMAS W. LAMONT

ILLUSTRATED

W. H.



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For
MY CHILDREN
and
MY GRANDCHILDREN

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Foreword

In these brief sketches of my boyhood in a parsonage, I have made little attempt to be chronological or consecutive. All these pieces have been written from memory, except as to some letters and a few family records. I have set down my recollections in just the way that I have occasionally told some of them to my family for their amusement. They have to do with the unexciting annals of a happy family, leading a serene but active life more than half a century ago. In 1802 William Wordsworth declared that "plain living and high thinking are no more." We had the plain living, and if the thoughts of my family and of the community failed to be high, they were at least kindly. And certainly my father and mother did "travel on life's common way in cheerful godliness."

With clergymen's salaries in the country as low as they were when I was a boy, our household had to economize to an almost painful, and at times certainly ludicrous, degree. But that practice, perhaps becoming almost habit, probably did us no harm in its bearing on our later and more abundant years. We were reared in the simple idea that any possible spare income was to be given away freely but was never to be wasted.

The reader must remember that in the world of

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which I speak we had no motorcars or buses, no telephones, no radio. Our houses were lighted by kerosene lamps, or at best by gas. A few of the larger cities had street horse cars, but no electric or trolley cars, and the kitchen and household gadgets for economizing labor that are a commonplace with us today were totally lacking. There was little plumbing, and while arguments were waged over Darwin's thesis of the evolution of the human species, at any rate we were not much troubled with germ theories. So I have a hope that these few chapters may give a glimpse of a typical American scene, almost all of it on the banks of the Hudson River and in point of time in the final quarter of the last century.

As to the manners and customs of the Methodist church that my father served so faithfully for almost half a century, I should not be understood as speaking with the slightest disrespect. On the contrary, I have the highest esteem for the great contribution that the Methodist church has made in strengthening the moral and religious life of the American community, for the sacrifices that its devoted servants for generations have made in the cause of truth and just living.

My life has by great good fortune been filled with varied experience, with sight of many lands and peoples, acquaintance with eminent and interesting individuals in my own and other countries, constant effort in the world of affairs, through booms, panics, rescue parties,

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and forlorn hopes; daily activity through many decades of peace and war. If I had to account for the bestowal upon me of all these opportunities, I should lay it largely to good luck but perhaps even as much to my boyhood days in a parsonage. If, too, I have seemed oversentimental at times about my family and our life together, the fact is that about my boyhood I have a great sentiment. I feel as Sir James Barrie did about his tribute to his mother in *Margaret Ogilvy*. "Many," he said, "think it too intimate, but I could write of my mother in no other way."

I wrote these scattered paragraphs at odd moments through the summer and fall of 1944, when over the whole globe there hung a pall of horror and destruction in this vast and most cruel of armed conflicts that the world had ever seen. Naturally the current of my thoughts was not always able to flow smoothly, interrupted and broken as it was by the day's news. My mind was bound to wander from the serenity of my boyhood days back to the stirring and momentous events of a world in torment and labor. So the reader will forgive me for my occasional comments upon past or current events, and will perhaps understand what has prompted me to emphasize the contrast between our present tumultuous days and those of my boyhood in that sheltered period, that Age of Innocence, in our country's existence.

T. W. L.

October 1945

M Y B O Y H O O D
I N A P A R S O N A G E

The Place Where I Was Born

MY MOTHER USED TO TELL ME THAT IN THE MONTHS before I was born she would sit on the porch of the little parsonage, looking westward to the Catskill Mountains, and pray that she would have a serene and sturdy son. That was at Claverack, a short distance back from the east bank of the Hudson River and only a few miles below Albany. Claverack was a Dutch corruption of "Clover Reach" where for miles the meadows waved and nodded with lovely pink and white clover. This region was of the Van Rensselaer tradition. In fact back in the seventeenth century and for two hundred years thereafter the lower manor house of the Van Rensselaers was at Claverack.

I was too young then to know all that. In fact at

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eighteen months I shook the dust of Claverack off my feet and left its six hundred inhabitants for good, my father having been transferred to another "charge," the equivalent in the Methodist nomenclature for "parish." But years later I found that same little frame house where I was born. I too looked beyond the Hudson and saw the rampart of the Catskills growing blue under the westering sun—the same that my mother had gazed at through the long spring and summer afternoons. It chanced that I was taking a motor trip up the Hudson to have another look at the several parsonages where I spent most of my boyhood—my father, in conformity with the itinerant system, having been pastor at the Methodist churches for successive periods of three years at Claverack, Catskill, Coxsackie, Saugerties, and Rondout.

It was one of these communities looking down over the placid river that in the course of my trip I reached on a Sunday; and just as the service was drawing to a close, I slipped into the little white Methodist church where my father had served. The preacher had finished his sermon and was taking up a special collection for the new organ. He explained pleadingly that they were

THE PLACE WHERE I WAS BORN

\$49.31 short of the full amount and he adjured the Almighty to send down manna from Heaven to make up the deficit. So when the box came to me sitting in a rear pew and feeling like a rich Presbyterian instead of a poor Methodist minister's son, I dropped in a fifty dollar bill that I sometimes carried with me for emergencies. When the deacon reached the altar he flipped his hand toward the plate. I saw the preacher give it a quick look. Then as he glanced at me far down the aisle he raised his hands fervently and said: "We thank Thee, O Lord, for this timely succor!" Nobody knew but the preacher and the deacon and me; nobody smiled but me.

Only those who have spent the impressionable years of their lives, as I did, in the Hudson River Valley can imagine the sentiment that that region begets. Part of it comes from the beauty of the river and of its banks with the Catskill Mountains and their ever-changing hues always in the background. Then too we were brought up on the historical traditions that cluster about the river—colonial days, early and late, traces of the French of the seventeenth century, of the Dutch, of Governor Peter Stuyvesant and his wooden leg, of the English pioneers, of American Revolutionary times, and

then the quiet developments of the nineteenth century.

To a child the years always stretch out at immense length. The winters, filled with snow and frost, never seemed to end. In my little world, skating began at Thanksgiving and on that small pond in the hollow of the low hills back of the church the ice lingered almost to April. The long vacation days of July and August go by, one by one, peaceful and sleepy, with the humming of the bees. And when the dusk comes dropping down, a small boy, deliciously tired from the swimming and the running and the final household chores, is glad to stumble up the stairs and fall drowsily into bed.

Lacking the intimacy and ancient background that Gray gave us in his *Elegy*, the Hudson Valley landscape had yet the splendor of harvest, field, and forest; always before us the kindly and welcome river shimmering in the glow of its upper reaches, and back of us, towering up less than a dozen miles away, the green and blue forested slopes and peaks of the rugged Catskill Mountains. And with the lightning flashes from the mountain fastnesses as the sultry August day drew to its close, there came those sudden claps and thunderings, the same that Washington Irving told about in his *Sketch*

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Book which Mother read to us children—the sound of Hendrik Hudson's men playing at bowls in the deep-hidden recesses of the mountains, their rounded slopes turned now from blue to an inky black to match the clouds. How exciting it was for a small boy to cling to such thrilling fable! And were not those dim, delicious thoughts that come just before sleep closes in like old Rip Van Winkle's when that heavy drowsiness came stealing over him as he sank into his twenty years of slumber?

*“Greater Love Hath No Man
Than This—”*

WHAT ARE MY EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS? I CANNOT answer that question positively any more than you can. As we look back on our early childhood, we realize that there is a misty between-times—something that is part of the daydreams of those lovely years and part of the dawn of actual recollection. They intermingle and for the happily reared child they are all romance and wonder and delight.

From out of that bright mist there emerges for me one afternoon that stands out as the first memory that I can cling to and declare my own. I was hardly over four years old at the time. We were living in old Katonah

“GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN—”

(long before the new aqueduct came which changed the whole face of the landscape), and my father's congregation was so scattered that he kept a horse, Jennie, to make his pastoral calls every afternoon.

He always let my sister or me go with him and we would take the ends of the reins and pretend that we were driving. On this particular afternoon he was called out hurriedly and harnessed the horse in a rush, and I just had time to clamber into the seat beside him. He urged Jennie to a much faster pace than usual and after a couple of miles we drew up before a small farmhouse standing quite close to the roadside. Father hitched the mare and hurried inside.

The wait for me was never irksome. I could look over the woods and fields, breathe in the sweet air from the new-mown hay, and meantime hold the reins and drive off into far distant spaces, visit all the lands of my fairy tales and dreams, gaze upon new landscapes, forests, and seas, and meet strange peoples.

But this time my small wandering mind was called back by the sound of my father's voice. He was praying—that I knew at once. And I seemed to realize that in his supplications there were unusual tenderness, comfort,

and reassurance. I had no mind that could characterize these things, but the gentleness was there and my childish dreams gave way to a sense of awe and mystery.

Finally my father emerged and with him came the husband with tears in his eyes. He wrung my father's hand and in a broken voice murmured, "Dominie, you have opened the very gates of Paradise for my poor dear." And my father gave him his blessing and said, "Your good wife is at rest with the saints. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' "

Years later as a grown boy one day I reverted with my father to this episode of my childhood days. "Yes," said he, "your memory has served you well. That poor woman had rescued a neighbor's daughter from death. The girl had spilled out on the floor some red-hot coals from a rickety kitchen stove. She had set herself and the house afire. The woman saved the girl. But she herself with her long skirts had been fatally burned. Yes, they summoned me and I prayed with her until she died."

"What were you and the farmer saying, Father?" I asked. And then he told me, just as I have set the words down from my memory of this later talk. At all events



T.W.L. AT THE AGE OF 7

“GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN—”

that afternoon with my father marked the end of that shadow period when childhood dreams and misty memories intermingled. From then on my recollections clearly took the lead.

My Conversion at the Age of Nine

HAVING AT THE AGE OF SEVEN SIGNED THE BLUE RIBBON Temperance Pledge and thus put behind me for life the Demon Rum, two years later, in the course of my Father's Cossackie pastorate, I joined the church. Gladstone, I think it was, once said: "The sense of sin, the sense of sin—that is the want in modern life." The weakness in my "conversion" (the term always employed) was that I was not sufficiently convicted of sin. To be truly converted one had to be overwhelmed with the knowledge that one was filled with sin, and to confess that conviction in no uncertain terms. Then and then only would the powers from on high step in and effect a conversion

MY CONVERSION

so thorough that one was filled with exultation and joy. The most hardened offender was not beyond the pale. His soul, upon conversion, would in the words of the old hymn be "washed whiter than snow." All this was an intensely encouraging doctrine for sinner as well as saint.

REVEREND AND HIS FATHER.

We used to hear not infrequent instances of deathbed repentance. And we accepted without question (and still accept) the Christian precept that it is never too late to mend. The deathbed repentant, even though by ever so slight a margin, had secured a sure place for himself among the heavenly hosts. He could feel assured that after years of loose living, he had the same certainty of salvation as the prim old maid who had joined the church in her teens and ever after had lived a godly, sober, and righteous life. Did we not all recall the passage from St. Luke: "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance"?

Now this tenet, held and worked out so circumstantially by the Methodists, was indeed founded on the soundest possible doctrine as enunciated in the New Testament. Nor would I for one moment question its

validity or effectiveness. But the Methodist elders of my day made such an exact formula of it that it was sometimes difficult for a young and rather puzzled nine-year-old convert, such as I was, to feel that he had fully qualified on the original premise, namely, a sound conviction of having led a sinful life.

I had been stirred at the revival meetings by the singing and the praying and by the exhortation for us to come to the altar and lay down our sins, and I had for several successive evenings seen scattered groups of men and women, young men and maidens, rise and go forward to fall on their knees, confess their conviction of sin and desire for salvation. So, finally, like several others only a trifle older, I was swayed by the fervor of the gatherings—exalted, we should call it in these days—and was ready to go to the altar with some of my friends and ask for forgiveness.

Half a century has passed, and I can now say that I, like some of the others, all of us sincere, was moved by emotion more than by any intellectual process, for a sheltered child of nine knows nothing of the world of evil. As a matter of fact, my father, realistic as well as spiritual, while he encouraged my attendance at the



MY FATHER, THOMAS LAMONT, AS I FIRST REMEMBER HIM



MY MOTHER WHEN I WAS ABOUT SIX YEARS OLD

revival meetings, had never urged upon me privately the idea that I should confess my sins. Perhaps his restraint gave me at that time a tinge of surprise, but today it does not.

After being duly received into the church, the formula was that you had to serve six months as a probationer, after the manner of a mild purgatory. Then if you had not backslidden you would be received as a full member. After that first induction, I say, I began to examine myself to determine whether I was as full of sin as my confession had indicated. I knew that I must be selfish, a trifle disobedient, perhaps impertinent at times. But was I just chock-full of sin as I had thought I must be when I was converted? I was certainly not idle, for I was on the run all day long. But ah, yes—here it was! I hated to do household chores, such as picking over the cinders and ashes from the sitting room stove to salvage any unburned coals fallen through the grates; or drying the supper dishes; or, on a lovely spring Saturday morning, mucking over a pile of potatoes in the cellar to get the sprouts off. I did the chores. But I *hated* to do them. There undoubtedly was the sin. If I had not been sinful I should have loved to do chores. I hated chores then and I have hated them all my life.

This thought helped some but even so the thought came back, Was I full of sin, a brand ready for the burning? Indeed I had always led a very happy life, never too hot or too cold (freezing my thumbs on my mile walk to school in zero weather did not really count as cold); I had always had plenty to eat and drink and wear and good beds to sleep in; I had kind, gentle, and generous parents, who seldom either reprimanded or punished me. There was nothing that I could possibly ask for more than to continue just such a happy life. And if that meant that I had been full of sin, well, the fearful thought came to me, I could ask for nothing better than to live in sin forever! At this point I bade Satan to get behind me, for I knew that any such idea was base. Yet my early conversion, even though I was by no means satisfied with its quality, inevitably led to a more active part in the various phases of our church worship.

It is true, too, that even if at the time I was barely old enough to know my own mind, yet those early associations, even the occasionally overemotionalized meetings, all helped to give me a basic faith that I have been able to cling to ever since, no matter how far I may have strayed from some of the simple beliefs of my childhood.

The Lord's Day

WAS IT THE LORD'S DAY OR WAS IT NOT? THE QUESTION seemed as simple as that. The Methodists old and (perforce) young answered it sweepingly in the affirmative. They were so thorough about it that every waking minute on Sunday was devoted to their Maker, whether He wanted it or not. Take the services, for example: At 9:30 A.M. winter and summer, there were two or three "class meetings," the members of the church having been divided into groups under "class" leaders, so that they could compare notes and benefit from one another's pious experiences.

Then came church at 10:30, a full-dress affair with two or three Prince Albert coats in the congregation plus my father's in the pulpit. My mother played the

organ, a small one with no stops, and also trained the choir one evening a week. The Official Board of Church Trustees approved this and deemed this service to be so honorific as to call for no compensation. A few members of the board thought the tunes she played during the Sunday morning collection, a bit of Handel and Beethoven now and then, sounded "too fancy," but they allowed on the whole that her performance would answer.

After church came more class meetings. The dread with which I attended the first one after becoming a member of the church remains with me to this day. The class leader, Mr. Hiram Brown, ranged methodically back and forth across the three pews and asked each member to testify as to his religious experience of the week. Terror clutched my heart as he began on our pew. The fatal moment came: "What is your testimony, Brother Tommy?" he asked—everybody was supposed to call everybody else "brother" or "sister."

Now Brother Brown kept a lumberyard, not so big as the leading Presbyterian elder's lumberyard, yet filled with odds and ends of boards and what not, half buried in the sawdust. Some friends and I that week

had nipped in and taken some of these odd bits of board to play blocks with, so I was oppressed with guilt as well as terror.

"Speak up, Brother Tommy," said Class Leader Brown. That time when Aeneas, after the fall of Troy, landed in Thrace and, pulling up some myrtle by its roots, evoked the agonized cries of Polydorus buried there—Aeneas' hair, I say, was not in it with mine in standing on end nor his voice in sticking in his throat. I tried to summon some spit into my parched mouth, but nothing came. My nice mother saved me from a fate that seemed worse than death to me.

"Tommy has been a very good boy this week, Brother Brown," she said sweetly. And then, clutching my cold hand, she whispered, "Tell him you are trying to be a Christian soldier, Tommy." I gulped twice, thought miserably of the Brown lumberyard, and managed to mumble "Christian soldier." I didn't have the nerve to say I was trying to be one. Brother Brown nodded and passed on to the other victims. Some of them to my astonishment seemed to relish the chance to talk out loud about themselves.

Class meeting over, we went home and had our cold

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Sunday dinner. And at 2:30 P.M., nodding with sleep on hot summer days, we trooped to Sunday school, which, compared to the misery of class meeting, wasn't bad fun on the whole. Then at 3:45 P.M. home again to sit "in the yard" the rest of the afternoon and watch with envious eyes the Presbyterian children walking gaily off to the woods or the brook. That is where the difference came in. The Presbyterians simply shut their eyes to the fact that, from dawn till dark, it was the Lord's Day. During most of Sunday afternoon they simply forgot entirely Who was Who. We Methodists never forgot. We were not allowed to.

Some of the leading members of the church begged my father to invite to the January revival meetings a special exhorter. His name was Snodgrass. He enjoyed a certain repute as a lively speaker and as able to work on the feelings of his hearers. My father said he "never relished" these special exhorters whose ways to him seemed rather more professional than spiritual. The church group, however, urged the beauties of Mr. Snodgrass' personality and methods strongly. So my father yielded and the exhorter was duly invited.

On the Sunday when he arrived Mr. Snodgrass pro-

posed to attend first the Sunday school. None of us children took a shine to him, tall, cadaverous, and with an Adam's apple that was alarmingly active. Mr. Snodgrass began to recount the life of a very naughty boy whom he had known. He told how that boy was disobedient, idle, utterly failed to learn his Sunday school lessons. But after a time this bad boy had a dream of the torment that might await him if he died. A light suddenly came to him, he was converted, and from that time on, was ever obedient and finally came to stand at the head of his Sunday school class.

Mr. Snodgrass paused to let all that sink in. We sat silent and rather glum. "Now who," asked Mr. Snodgrass with bright eyes, "who do you suppose that sinful little boy was that has now grown up to be a noble, useful, Christian man?"

"I'll give you children a chance to guess," said Mr. Snodgrass seductively. "Who do you suppose it was? Now that little boy over there," said Mr. Snodgrass, pointing a gaunt finger at me, "you give me your guess."

I shook my head dumbly. "Well, then, that little girl over there," labored the exhorter. "Who do you think it was that grew from that naughty little boy into this

fine, Christian gentleman?" And Mr. Snodgrass squared his shoulders and gave us a beaming smile.

"What," he said, "no answers? Why then, dear children, I'll tell you, I'll tell you—'twas *me*!"

But to go back to the normal Sunday: the slow afternoon dragged its weary way along. Cold supper at 5:30 gave us a break. Bread and butter, plenty of milk, apple sauce and cookies. Nothing could be better. Then the Young People's service at 6:15, with some spirited singing of old hymns, all to the good, and church service at 7:30 and another sermon. But Monday was in sight and most of the congregation seemed in better spirits. Nine o'clock came and we all trooped home, relaxed, ate apples, and laughed. The end of a perfect day!

I asked my father what about the Presbyterians—did he suppose that the Lord was vexed at their taking walks on Sunday afternoon, pairing off and doing all that other weekday stuff? Father did not seem to deplore as much as he should have the conduct of the Presbyterian boys and girls. "Oh, well," he said, "some Methodist communities are stricter than others. A young preacher like me mustn't break the rules." Then he added something about being in Rome and having to do as the Romans do. I did not gather the purport

of the remark until later years. But there remained a question in my mind. To put it in terms of today, I think I wondered dimly whether my father believed that perhaps God was immanent everywhere, in the hills, in the woods, along the running brook, and that the light-minded Presbyterian boys and girls were not necessarily doomed to hell-fire. Could there have been something pantheistic in the philosophy of my orthodox, but very tolerant parent?

My father was always on excellent terms with the other clergymen of the community, including the Catholic. The Catholic parish house was situated only a short distance from the Methodist parsonage, and the priest not infrequently of a summer afternoon would drop in for a friendly chat with my father. They had many parish problems in common, for their congregations were both made up mostly of families of limited income.

My father and the friendly priest, sitting together on the front porch, would finally finish their chat, and the priest would rise to go. "Well, Frater," he would almost always say to Father with a twinkle in his eye, "you and I will now be going our separate paths in the work of the Lord—you in your way and I in *His*."

I must add a word on the subject of the Rich Presby-

terians and the Poor Methodists. In the villages or small towns where we lived the rich Presbyterians were always the café society and we poor Methodists were the proletariat. The president of the Presbyterian Board of Trustees ran the biggest lumberyard and the largest coal pocket in the village, the clerk of the Presbyterian Board kept the number one butcher shop. The Methodists could boast for their board president only that he had the second-best general store and that the butcher shop of another member of the board had fair cuts, but acknowledgedly not so tender as the Presbyterian steaks. Of course as a matter of church politics my father had to do all his trading at the Methodist shops.

Then too the Presbyterians bespoke all the most honorific places in other activities. The Presbyterian Board president's wife was of course president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a most enviable distinction. The Methodist Board president's wife never got beyond the recording secretaryship of the Union. If there were a dozen horse-and-buggies in the village, at least ten of them were driven by Presbyterians.

And so it went all along the line. Socially the difference did not count for much. The Presbyterian dominie

either had gone to college with my father, who was graduated in 1856 from Union College under old President Eliphalet Nott, or they often had friends in common. At day school we were all friends together, Presbyterians, Methodists, Catholics, and Jews. And I am sure not a touch of envy ever came to my father or mother, even when they knew about the Presbyterian Board's installing a bathroom in the Presbyterian parsonage. There were only two or three other bathrooms (all Presbyterian) in town, so why should we worry over a plumbingless parsonage—except that the outdoor privies were mighty cold and dark on zero weather nights. Perhaps now and then I had a slight inferiority complex about the Presbyterians, all seemingly suffused with wealth. But I had a forgiving nature and showed it eventually by going so far as to marry a Presbyterian girl.

Donation Parties

OF ALL THE TRIALS THAT THE COUNTRY PARSON—AND IN this case especially his wife—had to cope with, the annual Donation party was about the worst. This gathering, ostensibly for the sole benefit of the preacher and his family, seemed to work out as an invention of the Evil One. It was held in the parsonage and the donees certainly gave the party. What happened was this: those country charges—many of the church members being farmers who dealt only in kind—not infrequently found themselves hard up when it came to paying the preacher's salary, meager as it was. So toward the end of December, when the deficit was looming in sight, they notified the dominie that on a certain evening they would arrive in full force to give him a Donation. We children thought

NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR



MY MOTHER AT THE AGE OF 38

DONATION PARTIES

it was great fun, but from sad experience it gave our parents a sinking of heart.

The night would arrive and scores of men, women, youths, and maidens would drive up or tramp in, covered with snow, to get the hallway soaking wet and begin their tumultuous greetings. At a given moment the multifarious Donation would be bestowed. There would be lugged into the house and dumped down almost anywhere the various contributions. There were enough jelly layer cakes, heavy and light, to feed a regiment for a month, dozens of doughnuts, sinkers and what not, scores of loaves of bread, soda biscuit so manifold that, since childhood, I have never been able to look one in the face, a barrel or two of apples and of potatoes, occasional packages of butter, now and then a whole unwieldy quarter of beef, lots of pork (which our whole family, with perhaps less vigorous digestion than others, detested), and what was a white elephant, a couple of huge twenty-gallon cans of milk.

Then at the proper moment the dominie was asked to say grace and the party fell to to test the worthiness of their own viands. Angel cake and dill-pickle recipes were bandied about as on a modern radio program. The

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company ate up most of the butter and scattered crumbs of biscuit and apple-squash-and-mince pie all over the ground floor. Then, the Donation having been thus duly delivered, the women members would wander at will through the rooms upstairs and down, fingering all my mother's bedspreads and keepsakes, while the young people in a rollicking, uproarious mood would foregather upstairs, usually in the spare room, blow out the kerosene lamps, and proceed to frolic.

On one occasion, I recall, in a mood of pure joy they emptied a large water pitcher on the spare mattress and ruined it; and then in an ecstasy of humor they threw all my mother's best pillowcases out of the window into the storm, where they were so quickly covered with snow that they were never recovered until the following spring. All in a spirit of good fun, you know. But it was that particular night after all the company had gone that my mother broke down and wept over the ruin of much of her simple but precious wedding outfit. When the assets and liabilities were set forth, it was clear who had given the party. Long before it could be consumed, most of the bread and cake would be moldy and the milk gone sour.

DONATION PARTIES

My father always had a serene philosophy and a comforting degree of confidence in the goodheartedness of human beings. But this was too much even for him and he declared aloud that there would never be another Donation party as long as he occupied the parsonage. He said he much preferred to lose a part of his salary, and he lived up to that precept, for the accounts that he kept in the diary that he carefully wrote up from early manhood to old age show that from more than one charge he moved away with his salary still in part unpaid.

My father should have been a financier instead of a clergyman. How he and my mother ever managed we never knew, but somehow or other even with growing expenses, he managed to keep in the black. Without any profession or ado he always made a practice of giving the first tenth of his income, a tithe, "to the Lord." Then, in the order named, came living, educating his children, and books. The daily *New York Tribune* was our stand-by, and for periodical literature, *Harper's Weekly*, *Harper's Monthly*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and one or two religious weeklies that we children by-passed. As to the annual budget, here are two typical years that I have lifted bodily from my father's diary:

MY BOYHOOD IN A PARSONAGE

1879	Receipts	\$1,162.38
	Expenses	1,134.05

28.33

(Benevolences, part of expense .. \$ 125.00)

1880	Receipts	\$1,184.40
	Expenses	1,110.19

74.21

(Benevolences, part of expense .. \$ 129.23)

I note that in each year the tithe for the Lord, "the benevolences"—exceeded the scheduled 10 per cent; yet there was a bit of margin to the good. It was by such management, I suppose, that my parents were able to send all three of their children away to preparatory school and college. Under those conditions it is little wonder that as a small boy I was eminently satisfied with my spending allowance of five cents a week. According to my brother, I remarked one day rather plaintively that when I had once broken the precious nickel it was astonishing how fast the pennies went!

I must add a postscript to the sad tale of the Donation parties, to say that that particular occasion which I de-

DONATION PARTIES

scribed was not in any of the delightful Hudson River charges that I have named, but in a rather obscure one back in the country. I ought to add too how welcome at least the Donation apples all were. They were a nightly before-going-to-bed fixture in our household, although my father would have shaken his head if any one had recited to him the latter-day couplets:

When I was young and full of life
I loved the local doctor's wife
And ate an apple every day
To keep the doctor far away.

It was in this same "Donation" village that my father, at the close of one Sunday morning service, was inducting into his future duties a new young preacher whose education was not altogether complete. My father had allotted to him the gracious task of calling forward and welcoming into the fold thirteen new church members. The young preacher, visibly embarrassed by this honor, announced in loud rasping tones: "Will the new members kindly come forward? We shall receive into Holy Communion with us today six adults and seven adulteresses." My father's face became a bright pink glow.

He spoke in a low murmur in the young preacher's ear: "Just call them men and women. That will be better."

Even I had read enough of the Bible to know that not all women are adulteresses. I looked at my mother. She had had a sudden fit of coughing and held her handkerchief over her face. At home after church my father said, although not severely, "Caddie"—his diminutive for Caroline—"Caddie, you should not have smiled." At which my sweet but lively mother threw her head back and this time burst into peals of laughter.

Family Prayers—Morning and Evening

LOOKING BACK ON ALL THOSE YEARS OF MY BOYHOOD I realize once more how essentially happy our family life was. There were minor trials. The family income was small but it was enough. My mother, not very robust, never had adequate household help, the parsonages were ill heated, with only coal stoves in a few rooms to keep us going, plumbing was entirely absent, and at times local church prejudices and politics were exceedingly trying to both my father and mother. But lesser difficulties like these never daunted them. Cheerfulness and a simple, open-house hospitality were ever our fortunate lot. Always sustained by an implicit faith in the provi-

dence of God and the goodness of man, both my parents were patient and firm in adversity, with a due sense of humility when things were going well and infinite tolerance for the shortcomings of others. They were of the school that has firm conviction that in this world Good is finally more powerful than Evil and despite all setbacks will in the heart of man finally prevail.

There were certain features of our family life that to my dying day will stand out clearly in my mind, though to put them on paper sounds priggish. One was the religious attitude, simple and without cant. Another was the gentleness of my parents. My father could on occasion be firm as a rock, "tough" would be the word in these days, but toward their children and other human beings both my parents were always kindly and tender-hearted. Another feature was the insistence that we three children should spend much of our spare time in reading.

We always had family prayers twice a day, first in the morning just before breakfast when my father read a chapter or a passage from the Bible, and then all of us including the hired girl knelt down while he offered a brief prayer, winding up with the Lord's Prayer, in which everybody joined. If the morning chapter was

FAMILY PRAYERS

from the New Testament, my father used a small, leather-bound Greek Testament, picked up by one of his brothers-in-law, a soldier in General Grant's army, from a Rebel rifle pit after one of the bloody battles of the Wilderness.

Then immediately after our early (5:30 P.M.) supper again we gathered in the sitting room and, beginning with my father, each spoke a verse from the Scriptures. In my tender years this was a bit of an ordeal, but I was permitted to recite more often than was my right the two shortest verses of the Bible, "Jesus wept" and "God is love." My sister Lucy, three years older, sometimes felt that I was favored with an undue monopoly on these two verses, but she was generous about it. Frequently when we had relatives or friends visiting us, which was often enough for our cramped quarters, my mother would play a hymn on the old square rosewood piano that had been given to her at the time of her wedding and we would stand up and join in the singing before Father offered the brief final prayer. But normally we would rush out to get in as much play as we could before dark.

In wintertime our evenings were very domestic. In

those days in the country people seldom went out for an evening meal. My family would gather in the small sitting room, my father reading—history almost invariably—my mother writing letters or perhaps with some of the family mending in her lap, my brother and sister at their lessons, and I, too young as yet for school, playing with my rude toys. Then, before I said good night and went up to that icy room that had no stove and leapt into bed in no time, my mother would gather us around the piano and would play a hymn or two for us all to sing. It might be “O Mother Dear, Jerusalem” which my brother loved to sing, or my father’s favorite to the end of his days, “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go,” or some other of the old familiar hymns that have come down to us through the generations.

There remains yet one childish picture that still comes back to me. It is of that gay and gifted mother of ours who used to play to us so simply and yet so movingly. She is at the piano with me seated on her lap, held safe by her comforting arms on either side, as her hands move over the keys and bring forth those magic strains. Now and then she would take my chubby forefinger in her firm clasp and with it pick out the air of “Home, Sweet

Home." That after all these years remains today my sole accomplishment on the pianoforte. I can play "Home, Sweet Home" with one finger.

"Were not your father and mother almost too good to be true?" said an old friend of mine to whom I showed these boyhood sketches before consenting to their publication. Perhaps, indeed, they sound so. But I have put down my memories of them just as they have come back to me. Undoubtedly my father and mother had their little scraps, just as every pair of normal human beings are bound to have. But whatever differences they had were so insignificant that I do not happen to remember them. I do recall once in Saugerties when we three were returning to the parsonage about nine o'clock after the weekly prayer meeting. My mother was a bit in the lead and, poking her key at the lock of the front door, she found it on the jar. She gave a gasp and whispered hoarsely to my father—"Burglars!"

"Burglars! Fiddlesticks!" he said contemptuously and, thrusting her aside, he rushed into the hall, lighted the lamps, and then searched the whole house thoroughly. My mother, who had been really alarmed, settled down much relieved, and when Father had gone into his study

she said to me, in apology for his exhibition of brutality, "Tommy, your father almost never speaks to me like that, you know."

That silly little episode is all that I can, with considerable cudgeling of my brains, recall. Perhaps it was the marked difference in their temperaments that helped my parents get along so well together. My mother had immense admiration for my father. He was strong as a horse, from boyhood work on his father's farm; he was a good deal of a student and an omnivorous reader. His memory was astonishing. He could relate endless stories of his boyhood days, of his family, of his grandparents and great-grandparents, most of whom were very long-lived. His sermons from the pulpit (of which my sister found several barrels full after he died) were always to the point, and at times so moving to my mother that I have seen her much affected by them.

My father lacked my mother's knack with people and her social charm. She loved parties and entertainment and could get on with anyone. From the Irish side of her family she had inherited a perfect sense of humor. She had a gift for reading aloud. Her Irish brogue was wonderful, and she was almost as good in Negro dialect and in the guttural German accent. She was thus always

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in great demand at every kind of social function, church or other. And her gift for music, both vocal and instrumental, was marked. For all these qualities, joined to her efficiency, liveliness, and optimism, my father had immense admiration. And so it was, I suppose, that with their differing characteristics they got along swimmingly together in all the ups and downs of what for them both was a happy even though far from an easy life. This is the way I remember them.

It was I suppose because at college my father had taken honors in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and afterwards taught these subjects that he was able to read the Greek version of the New Testament so readily. Thus he was a help to us when we first began our Latin lessons at school. With one or two exceptions the local schools where we lived were sketchy and inadequate. All of us went to public school for a few years. But because of my father's changing pastorates, following the iron rule of the Methodist church in those days, we were at a disadvantage in having to suffer, rather often, varying methods and systems and almost always indifferent teaching talent. But I don't question that the public school experience was a good thing for all three of us. Certainly we were well trained in the democratic tra-

dition. No question of race or creed entered into our scheme of things in those sturdy days.

My brother Hammond, older than I by over six years, had taken to reading like a duck to water, and from the days he first returned from the Albany High School, where he prepared for Harvard College, he became the monitor and guide in reading for his younger sister and for me. Following the family tradition, I undertook to read the Bible myself and by the time I was fourteen I had waded through it twice. But I believe that was more in a spirit of emulation than anything else, and that I failed to gain as much as I should have from the wonderful passages of the Old and the inspiring chapters of the New Testament. My brother followed faithfully the family practice at prayers and church, but, although perfectly tolerant of it all, he never took much stock in the quick "conversions" from sin to a life of purity that were a feature of the Methodist procedure. It was left to my sister and me to go to the week-of-prayer meetings that always started off each new year, and finally to take a rather halting part in what now seem to me the strange ceremonies that marked our entrance into the church.

The Official Board Votes Some Bookshelves

THE CLERK OF THE OFFICIAL BOARD OF FATHER'S CHURCH was a carpenter and so had the job of putting in the additional bookshelves that, in response to my father's plea, the board had reluctantly voted. The members were of the impression that the dominie had far too many books anyway—no parsonage should be cluttered up with books was their idea. The clerk-carpenter confirmed that belief emphatically. When he arrived to measure the space required in the pastor's study, he screwed his head down and studied some of the titles reposing on the floor.

"Here's a funny thing, Dominie," he said. "What you

doin' with histories of England by three different men? Ain't one enough, for heck's sake?"

"Well," my father said in extenuation, "when I was trying to work my way through college, I had to teach school for several months each year. So I had to know more than just the dates about English history."

"Might be so," the carpenter argued, "but land sakes, three! Who's this Macaulay fellow?"

"He's a good example," my father replied, "you don't read Macaulay for dates at all. You don't much care how accurate he is. But he gives you the spirit of the times. He takes some episode in English history, sits down, and writes a wonderful essay about it. He composed some good martial verse, too," my father added mollifyingly, evidently thinking of "Horatius at the Bridge" and others.

"Don't make sense to me," the clerk stuck to his guns. "Three! Who was James Anthony Froude and who was David Hume?"

"Well, Froude was a different type," the dominie explained, "not so entertaining as Macaulay, but on some phases of English history much more of an authority. And Hume—well, my people were Scotch and I wanted

to read what a Scotsman had to say about England. He was a many-sided man, an important philosopher and a sound economist, too."

"Good at savin' his money, you mean?" said the carpenter.

"Well, I didn't mean exactly that," said Father, "but every Scotsman knows how to save money." Then he added: "The old Duke of Wellington, you know, is said in his later years always to have kept a volume of Hume by his bedside table."

The carpenter straightened up from his measuring: "Great waste of money, Dominie, I call it, and now more good money thrown away on shelves. Can't paint them, you know. That wa'n't voted."

"I didn't waste money on them," replied my father a little tartly, yet having to remember that this was the clerk of the board. "I bought all those as a young man, picked up every one secondhand. Don't paint the shelves. My wife will cover them with some scalloped paper, she says."

The carpenter departed unconverted. Later, after he had come in to put up the paintless shelves, he told the Official Board, one of our friends said, that "there of a

Monday mornin' when you'd think the dominie would want to be startin' on his next Sunday's sermons, I found him sittin' in his study readin' a book and chucklin'! 'What's all the fun about, Dominie?' I says. 'Why, I was reading *The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens,' says the dominie. 'Ever read it?' 'No, I ain't,' I said, 'nor likely to either.'

"I told the dominie I'd heard of Dickens," the carpenter went on, "and I'd heard he was coarse, wrote a lot about liquor shops, lowdown folks and such.

"But the dominie stood up for him—'much more good than harm in him,' he said. And there he was, lettin' his little boy read one of them—the ten-year kid [being myself] let me see the title, *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

"The dominie's a kindly man, but queer. Another day I ast him again what was so fine about Charles Dickens and he said well, for one thing Dickens seemed to like people. Some of these writers just hate people, the dominie said. That makes them sour. They really think, Dominie said, there's more evil in the world than good. That's a bad thing. Dominie kept insisting Dickens is just the other way 'round, he likes almost everybody. Dominie tried to tell me that nobody could ever be a

great writer unless—as Dominie put it—he liked human beings.”

Undoubtedly my father would have been of the modern school of thought represented by that eminent English critic who said recently that Dickens, because of his great sensitivity to the frailties of human beings, may, even like the mighty Shakespeare, be read a century from now; whereas “H. G. Wells whom people irritate and George Bernard Shaw who despises them and the brilliant Somerset Maugham who hates them may have long since vanished into the limbo of forgotten authors.”

The carpenter who had the stage was still a skeptic, but he was shaken—“Dominie means all right,” he said, “but’s got queer notions. Three histories of England! Don’t that beat the Dutch?”

But the colloquy proved a modest triumph for my father, because, buying some additional books for the Sunday school library, he had been having a hard time in urging the superintendent for once to by-pass the *Elsie Dinsmore* and *Dotty Dimple* types and take on some books like *Tom Brown’s School Days*, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, and *Westward Ho!* with its dauntless hero,

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Amyas Leigh. These volumes had not been in the Official Board's world at all, but the clerk-carpenter stood by my father, and in due course Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley came into great demand at the Coxsackie Sunday School Library.

When the shelves were finally in and covered with Mother's carefully scalloped paper, my sister and I were given the task of dusting and arranging the books, history in one place, biography in another, sermons in another, and so on. It is over sixty years since I did that chore, yet when I close my eyes a lot of the titles and the colors of the old cloth or sheep bindings still come back to me! There stood George Bancroft, William H. Prescott, and others to cover the American scene. Here was John Lothrop Motley with his *Dutch Republic*, and so on. Was there, I wondered as I turned to a frontispiece, a real flesh and blood John of Barneveldt? My father with his uncanny memory seemed to know them all by heart.

As my thoughts go back to my father's shabby but solid library, it is curious that memories that have lain dormant for a half dozen decades begin to live again. Among the histories I should have mentioned the half dozen

dark-brown volumes of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. For general reference we had Chambers' *Encyclopaedia, A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People*, published in London in 1877. Long out of print no doubt. I inherited our set and while it was long ago outmoded by the *Britannica*, you would be surprised at its usefulness even now.

Then there were the writings of a series of English divines. First, the only set that the Official Board would have been strong for: John Wesley's *Sermons* in shabby black cloth. Then came three of the group of liberal English churchmen whose names were outstanding in the middle and closing years of the nineteenth century. As a small boy I knew them only by the titles and the color of the bindings. There was Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster, in faded scarlet. And next to him, in purple that clashed with Dean Stanley's scarlet, was Canon Farrar of Westminster. There was another set whose author comes back to me slowly because I have seen none of those volumes for half a century. In old blue cloth, I remember that. Liddon! That was the name. But there was another name as well in the same title. I close my eyes and cudgel my brain—Bampton!

That was it. I remember now—Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*.

At the time, as I say, the contents of these varicolored volumes held no interest for me, but later I came to understand why my father frequently read them with such close attention. Dean Stanley, noted for his ecclesiastical tolerance, a quality that certainly appealed to my father, created a terrific furore among the High Church authorities by inviting to the Holy Communion all the group of scholars that had been working on the new Revised Version of the Bible, including among other nonconformists, a Unitarian. (Incidentally my father, I recall, was immensely interested in the new Revised Version and preserved for years the issues of the old New York *Herald*, being the entire text of the Revised Four Gospels that, as a newspaper beat, James Gordon Bennett had had cabled over in 1881.)

Canon Farrar's *Life of Christ* was and still is a classic in its field. The margins of its pages were filled with my father's markings and notes. Finally, who was Dr. Liddon? Henry Parry Liddon, an eloquent preacher whose Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of Our Lord gave him his first great repute. As canon of St. Paul's Cathe-

dral in London immense crowds used to flock to hear him in that stately domed edifice.

And whence came the Bampton of Liddon's *Lectures*? John Bampton was an eighteenth century English divine who established a fund so that Oxford and Cambridge universities could choose some eminent person annually to deliver lectures on religious topics. It is worth noting that every now and then in the course of the generations there would be chosen for these lectures some heterodox churchman whose pronouncements would create tremendous controversy in church circles. Perhaps no one feature of English life through the centuries has been more striking than the growth and the influence of the Church of England—an influence almost as strong upon the secular and political life of the community as upon its religious side.

I repeat that my wandering observations about these Victorian writers on religious topics may interest no one but myself. But, you see, in my boyhood the parsonage was filled with the goings and comings of minor church dignitaries. Visiting clergymen could always be assured of a good supper and a comfortable bed because "Sister Lamont was a prime provider." Naturally in the

early evenings from my corner behind the sitting room stove my ears would take in a lot of the talk. Thus the names and doings of divines like the Wesleys and later Dean Stanley and Canon Farrar would sink into my consciousness and become a minor but vivid part of my background.

Years afterwards I visited Greece and stood on Mars Hill, where St. Paul preached to the Athenians; and later, as a trustee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, I was conducted through the excavations at Old Corinth. Then there came back to me the memory of my father with Dean Stanley's *Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians* before him. Perhaps more than any other one text for his sermons, Father used that lovely passage from the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

Today it is melancholy to think of that land of beauty and delight as it has come down to us through the centuries, its people now distraught by turbulence, unrest, and desperate political faction.

The Catskills and a Boyhood Vision

IT WAS AS A BOY OF SEVEN THAT I FIRST VISITED THE Catskill Mountains. Every day a four-horse stage met the New York boat at the Catskill landing and drove the holiday passengers the twelve miles into various points in the mountains, but chiefly to the Catskill Mountain House. This was first built as early as 1823 and for years was one of the show spots for foreign travelers arriving in New York to visit.

My first journey to the Catskills was made possible by some cheery relatives who came up from New York to visit us. How my mother ever crowded four uncles and aunts into our small parsonage is beyond me. But fairly

early the next morning, with our overflowing lunch baskets, we all clambered into a spacious buckboard behind a pair of sturdy horses. It was a lovely three-hour drive through farm lands, meadows, and then rolling foothills before the final slow climb to our destination near the top.

The particular spot that we chose was not on the very crest of the mountains. The old and famous hostelry had wisely been built on a huge flat shelf of rock, a couple of acres in extent, that jutted out below the mountain's crest. From its edge there was a clear view not only of the Hudson River winding like a ribbon in the distance, but on a bright day, of the pinnacles of the state capitol at Albany, of the Berkshire Hills far to the east, and of the countryside down river almost to the highlands of the Hudson. James Fenimore Cooper in *The Pioneers* of the Leatherstocking Tales, over which I used to pore, makes his hero, Natty Bumppo, rhapsodize over this mountain prospect as he emerges onto the cliff and for the first time sees the world spread before him. A small boy has no words to express his feelings,

but I too was breathless as I was led to the edge of the cliff, looked with awe down the sheer drop of a thousand feet and, with the higher mountains behind and on either side, gazed at the magnificent hill and dale of the river's spacious valley. During that moment the whole world was at peace—no fear, hatred, or violence anywhere, storm and tempests at rest, only the whisper of the pines and the earth's gentle breathing.

With every boy there comes a time when there is a sudden awakening of the mind. It may have been gradually expanding for a long time, but then unexpectedly comes some happening or experience that bursts the door wide open. In after life I have always seemed to date my passing from childhood into real boyhood from that first thrilling moment when suddenly I seemed to see the Lord and all His works. What was the change that had come over me? Why from that time on did every day reveal new vistas in my little world? Why did the fields and forests, the skies, and shining stars seem to take on new and lovelier hues? Where had all these treasures been hidden? Whence came this feeling for

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the first time of growing strength and even power? To quote John Maschfield:

... to see and to create
A wealth of phantasy, past telling great,
Power to call at will, to see and sway
Peoples and creatures infinitely gay.

Naturally at the time my small and groping brain made no such analyses as these, asked itself no such specific questions. But certainly it was then or about that time that the eyes of my mind opened wide to discover the joys and delights and chances of boyhood and youth. A little later this voyage of discovery took the direction of books. With the family tradition and habit of reading, it was natural for me to drop my nursery tales and begin to explore the volumes of adventure and early history. After my American colonial and Revolutionary history, Dickens' *Child's History of England* was the first I picked up.

As the years quickly sped, each one of them opened new windows and showed me fresh treasures, so that when at thirteen I started joyfully away for prep school—leaving my mother with tears in her eyes at losing her

ewe lamb and myself too stupid to know what grieved her—the paths of the earth seemed spread out in manifold directions, each more spacious and promising than the other. Do you remember Joseph Conrad's *Youth*—which I presume is the first story of Conrad's that any of us reads—when the wrecked sailors finally, after frightful adventures, reach haven under the indomitable leadership of the twenty-year-old mate who has never faltered and who in later years muses to himself: "I remember my youth . . . the feeling that I could last forever, outlast the sea and earth and all men . . . the triumphant conviction of strength . . . the glow in the heart. . . ."

Ah, yes, when all the world is young with you, and every day, despite wind or weather, is radiant and golden with hope and joy; when life seems to promise us continually some marvel, some surprise just around the corner! Just as Aeschylus in *Prometheus* urges again and again that mere living should be happiness—simply to be a part of this great and pulsing world. When, then, does our youth come to an end? Like most of my contemporaries, I seem to have faced each year with un-

abated hope and confidence. I can hardly remember the time, even in the days of my amateur business affairs when things were going badly, that I have not awakened to each morning with a secret gladness in my heart that I was embarking on a new day of adventure, looking forward to fresh enterprise, even though there might be many rocks to roll away.

In my early days I was but one of the great multitude who seemed to feel that they had drunk from the spring of eternal youth. Possibly my own buoyancy was made stronger by the example of my father and my mother with their unshakeable faith that "all things work together for good to them that love God." The ready determination with which they faced the difficulties and discouragements of various new pastorates must have had some effect on my later outlook, and given me a confidence that after all the world was a good world and held out its promises only for us to grasp. Thus in my middle life I had a feeling that if each year I undertook a new adventure—a fresh journey east or west across the oceans to some far corner of the earth—then I was proving to myself that I was still young. These reflec-

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tions have no proper place, except for myself, in my memories of my boyhood days. But they afforded to me a comfortable conviction and philosophy to cling to and to live by.

Lamont Family Reunion

MY FATHER'S FAMILY WERE VERY CLANNISH. PERHAPS their tendency to stick close to one another came from their Scotch forebears. But they never omitted a chance to get together. Late in 1876 they held a family reunion. I was just turned six years of age, but still recall some of the high spots of that jolly gathering. The reunion was held at the Bound Brook, New Jersey, home of my hospitable Uncle George and Aunt Rebecca. How they managed to put us all up I cannot imagine, for the gathering included the family of my late grandfather, Thomas William Lamont, that is to say, his widow and ten of their thirteen children. All these had grown to maturity, had married, and been blessed with numerous progeny who were brought to the reunion.



THREE OF MY LAMONT UNCLES AND MY FATHER
TAKEN ABOUT 1856
STANDING, WILLIAM AND DAVID (TWINS)
SEATED, GEORGE AND THOMAS, MY FATHER, LOWER RIGHT

LAMONT FAMILY REUNION

My two chief recollections are first, the entire family assembled together in the large drawing room of Uncle George's Bound Brook house, while my father, the antiquarian and historian of the family, read aloud to us a paper that gave the story of our forebears before and after coming to America in 1750. My other recollection is of a big bedroom with any number of mattresses on the floor, made up into beds, and the whole room turned into a dormitory for us boy cousins of whom there must have been about fourteen.

The central figure of the party was always our grandmother, at the time sixty-five years old. She was a vigorous, intelligent woman, keeping an alert eye upon her many children and grandchildren and full of friendly anecdote. She always had a book in her hand. My recollection of her is of an old-fashioned person after a print in *Godey's Lady's Book*, usually clad in rustling black silk, so heavy and stiff it could have stood erect by itself, with a broad, ruffled, white lace collar at her throat.

She had been married at fifteen to Thomas William Lamont, after whom I was named, and had had thirteen children. She reared them to marriage, and, her husband having died when she was forty-two, she car-

ried on her own independent life for forty-five years more, declining to stay with any of her children, but visiting them now and then, and in summertime in the cool hills of Schoharie County always filling her house up with any number of us.

My father and his five brothers, all of whom were at the reunion, bore strong family resemblance to one another, and my uncles, David and William, seen standing in this old photograph of them as young men together, were what is known as "identical twins." So alike were Uncle David and Uncle William that the younger of their own children could not readily tell them apart. There was always 'immense merriment when the children wandered over to climb up on the wrong father's knee.

This photograph of these brothers nearest in age always reminds me of the old Scotch story of the four brothers one of whom, with unusual enterprise, decided to go to America to seek his fortune. Returning after a few years to his native land, when his steamer warped into quayside at Glasgow, he searched in vain for his three brothers whom he had written to meet him. When, however, he stepped off the gangplank, three hearty, full-

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bearded men rushed forward to give him greeting. Then the traveler recognized his three brothers and exclaimed, "But, boys, why the beards?" Whereupon one piped up indignantly and exclaimed, "But, Sandy, ha' ye forgot? Ye tuk the razor to Ameriky wi' yel!"

The account of the family that my father read aloud to us was highly entertaining. He had been to visit the graves (plainly marked with tombstones and inscriptions) at North Hillsdale, New York, near the Massachusetts line, of his great-great-grandfather Robert who with his widowed mother and two brothers, Archibald and John, had come to the New World in 1750. It was William, Robert's son, who enlisted and fought in the Revolutionary War. In a later chapter I may mention him again, because he lived to such a ripe old age that my own father was able to recall many of his stories as he heard them from his own lips. Because this Revolutionary veteran was such a character I quote a paragraph that my father wrote of a visit that the old gentleman paid to them when my father was a boy:

I recall two visits he made in our family, one about the year 1842, the last in 1846, when I was fourteen years old.

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I remember the tenderness and respect shown him by my father, his grandson. Though bent with age, he was still fairly vigorous. He was rather stout, had a broad forehead, with eyes set far apart, gray in color. He was bald and had heavy, shaggy eyebrows. He spoke of some of the battles of the Revolution he was in and the whizzing of the bullets by his ears; of doing sentinel duty after fatiguing marches and of the difficulty of keeping awake. His aged appearance and conversation made a lively impression upon me. The last time he visited us he was with his eldest son, Matthew Lamont, my great-uncle. It was in August or September, 1846. Great-grandfather walked out into the garden, which was close by, picked a cucumber and, peeling it, called for a little salt, then ate it with a relish, showing that his power of digestion was still good.

I have often wished that I had inherited the digestive apparatus of that great-great-grandfather of mine.

My father must have stored up in his boyhood memory almost all that he had been told about his great-grandfather, William Lamont. In the sketch that he wrote for us children a few years before his death in 1916, he speaks for example of his Great-Aunt Betsy Dibble who was the daughter of this William, and who

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told him that her father had served throughout most of the Revolutionary War, but not continuously, being allowed with many of his comrades in arms to return to his farm between campaigns and help get in the crops. This great-aunt, Father added, told him again about her father's service in the campaign leading up to the surrender of General Burgoyne in 1777.

These tales of our long-gone grandsires that my father read to the assembled family at the Bound Brook reunion interested us all, even us smaller children. My father related another tale, the detail of which I could not possibly remember if Father had not written it out more fully for me later. It was about his great-great-grand-uncle, Archibald, who was one of the three brothers emigrating to America in 1750. I quote my father's words, because the story was a part of a little-known episode in American history—the rebellion of the tenant farmers in the eighteenth century against the rich landowners of the Hudson River Valley—the Van Rensselaers and the Schuylers. My father was writing about the stand that the Lamont clan made. He said:

At the close of the Revolutionary War the times were hard; there was a depreciated currency; there were arrear-

ages in rent, and payments for land were overdue. The Van Rensselaers, who were large landowners in the region of North Hillsdale, tried to force collections. Archibald Lamont, the eldest brother of Robert (and the first of the name to come to this country), owned a farm on which the Van Rensselaers had no claim, as it lay beyond the limits of their patent. The agents of the Van Rensselaers and the officers of the law came and demanded payment for back rents. Archibald Lamont denied the claim, affirming that his farm was paid for, and that he held a deed of it. The bailiffs said they would arrest him. With a loaded gun he confronted the officers as they drew near, and said: "I will shoot and some of you will be killed. I, too, may be killed, but I will die before I will submit to such injustice."

They went away for the time, but one day returned unexpectedly and found Archibald without his loaded gun. They arrested him and threw him into the Claverack jail. Claverack at that time was the county seat of Columbia County.

William Lamont, our great-grandfather, got together a dozen or more men, and hastened to Claverack to rescue his uncle. With a blacksmith's hammer he succeeded in wrenching off the staple and lock of the jail door and burst in, telling his astonished uncle, "Go out and ride home!"

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His uncle said: "Will, they will kill you for this."

"Never mind," Will replied, "we will attend to that later."

William was threatened by the county sheriff, Fonda, but was never arrested for his highhanded act.

My father's reunion chronicle being concluded, the big family dispersed, the cousins to run around at various games, their elders sitting sedately inside, "visiting" together, retelling the tales of their childhood days at Charlotteville in Schoharie County where they had all been reared on the big family farm. At the end of a quiet afternoon, before an early supper for us small folks, we were summoned to family prayers. My mother sat at the piano and led us all in singing several favorite hymns. Then we all knelt down and Father offered a brief prayer. Next day the groups scattered. A good many of the family, including my father and elder brother Hammond, journeyed to Philadelphia to view the great Centennial Exposition (a world fair we should call it now). To my intense disappointment I was considered too young to go, and I recall even now the bitterness with which I reflected upon the inevitably faulty judgment which parents exhibit!

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The family all agreed to hold another reunion three years later at Charlotteville. Not so many of the family were able to return for this reunion. Even so it was a goodly gathering. Everything still centered on our grandmother. She was always a steadfast person and had passed through many experiences since years before, as young Elizabeth Maria Paine, she had married Thomas W. Lamont. He had died, as I have said, when she was only forty-two. He and my grandmother had driven off on what was in those days a long journey, one hundred miles or more to Binghamton near where Grandfather owned some property. On the return journey the horse, frightened by a handcar on a near-by railway, had started to run away. Grandfather had great trouble in subduing him. But he did so, then got out of the wagon and died at once, undoubtedly from a broken blood vessel in his heart. Grandmother tried in vain to find a sign of life.

She adored her husband. Not quite so religious as he was, yet she was firm in her old-fashioned faith, and when after driving by night and day she finally reached home with her husband's body, she tried to comfort her thirteen children by telling of the help that came to her



MY GRANDFATHER, THOMAS WILLIAM
LAMONT, SHORTLY BEFORE HIS
DEATH AT THE AGE OF 49



MY GRANDMOTHER, ELIZABETH
MARIA PAINE LAMONT, AS SHE
WAS AS I FIRST REMEMBER HER

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when she found her husband breathed no more. "I could feel the angels' presence there," said Grandmother to them, as related by my father. "They had come to take your father to the heaven for which he had been preparing for years."

My father's devotion to his mother never slackened. Every year, no matter how far away and burdened he might be, he took the long, hard journey to Charlotteville to spend a few days with his mother—his last visit there being when she was eighty-seven, just before her death, and he himself was sixty-eight years old, by no means a young man. My excuse, if I need any for writing of my grandmother, is my own vivid recollection of her. Both in her home at Charlotteville in summertime, and in her occasional visits on us at the parsonage, she was always a magnetic figure. The vitality in both body and intellect that she showed could not but impress us youngsters, just as it was a quality that bound her own children to her closely to the end of her long life.

My Early Years in Reading

THIS CHAPTER OF MY BOYHOOD READING MAY SOUND a bit like a catalogue; yet it will perhaps be of interest to the new generation as giving a glimpse of the only way in which the children of my day, deprived of the uplifting education provided by the modern movie house, were driven to books for entertainment, and to the perusal of fairy tale, romance, and history for the stimulus of that imagination which broadens the mind and widens its horizons. At any rate that boyhood reading of mine was the open door for me to a life far beyond the bounds of day-by-day existence.

The first real book—outside of children's stories—that I mastered, at the age of seven, was *In the Wilds of Africa*, by W. H. G. Kingston, an English writer

whose elephants, lions, and gorillas still live in my imagination. To this day any story of African life draws me as with a magnet. In the late seventies and early eighties Paul Du Chaillu, a real explorer in African jungles, also had a lure for young people of my age. And I devoured David Livingstone, and a decade later the Henry M. Stanley volumes of African exploration. Was it upon Stanley's tomb that were written those lines from Browning?—

. . . who never turned his back but marched breast forward.

St. Nicholas Magazine was a household stand-by, then edited by Mary Mapes Dodge, author of *Hans Brinker; or the Silver Skates*, a mighty good story. Everybody read this in my boyhood, but for these spicier days I suppose it is far too flat. But J. T. Trowbridge in *St. Nicholas* was a corking good writer for boys. So was Noah Brooks, the author of *The Boy Emigrants*—six fine young Americans (Brooks must have been one of them!) who in the Gold Rush of '49 trekked out to California in a covered wagon. To this day, I can almost recite whole pages from that vivid tale.

Then there was a thrilling series of stories of life in Casco Bay in Maine, written by the Reverend Elijah Kellogg. The Casco Bay series and the Lion Ben series told of life in a primitive setting in the generations just following the American Revolution. Lion Ben was a young man of gigantic stature and prowess who was good as gold, had the disposition of a saint, and performed marvelous feats of strength and endurance.

What about *Robinson Crusoe* and also *Swiss Family Robinson*? Do our young people still devour them as we children did? Then there was Louisa Alcott's *Little Women*, which later was such a success in the movies and on the stage. Both *Little Women* and *Little Men* seemed to me more for the girls, but of course I read them. "Oliver Optic" I always had a sneaking fondness for, but was told he was a waste of time, and so with rather a sigh I gave up Tommie Toppleton and Waddie Wimbleton, and turned like a good little boy to improve my mind with *The Boy's King Arthur*, Froissart, and their kind. But they left me rather cold. It takes an artist to make over Sir Thomas Malory and keep the flavor of the original.

When it comes to the history of the American Rev-

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olution, give me every time C. C. Coffin's *Boys of '76*. I had it by heart before I was ten, and I'll wager no one can stump me on either the battles or generals of the Revolutionary War. *Boys of '76* (there were four particular favorites and two of them died a hero's death, much to my anguish) got me so thoroughly interested in the American Revolution that as a matter of course I later read maturer works on that period—a jolly good thing for me. Coffin also wrote *Old Times in the Colonies*, the period of the French and Indian Wars, and *Boys of '61*. But neither had the zest of *Boys of '76*. I considered General Gage, the British commander at Boston, no less than a scoundrel. Howe and Clinton weren't much better in my eyes, but I was always a little sorry for Cornwallis—he was such a perfect dub.

Two other great stand-bys of the youth of my time were *Tom Brown's School Days* and *Tom Brown at Oxford*. The days of that great headmaster of Rugby, Thomas Arnold, are worth anybody's reading, and Tom Brown at Rugby was a real fellow. But when he reached Oxford he seemed to go dead on his feet—at least the Oxford phase lacked most of the savor that the Rugby days gave.

In this same period we took up Captain Mayne Reid. Certainly I was on friendly terms with *The War Trail*, *The Scalp-Hunters* and others. Mayne Reid was a Briton, but lived much in America and served with great gallantry with the American army in our war with Mexico a century ago. Reid gives a vivid sense of our Wild West as it was in those early days. Rattling good stories of adventure as they are, yet their old-style, elaborate phrasing would fail to make appeal to boys of the present day. Of course everyone read Captain Marryat's *Children of the New Forest*.

I had almost forgotten Jules Verne, who gave to my young life glimpses of a new, mysterious, and enthralling world of earth, sea and sky. He was the man whose dreams came true. The first of Jules Verne's that came my way was *The Survivors of the Chancellor*, a title one almost never hears mentioned nowadays. This was a moving tale of fire and shipwreck at sea, the survivors on one great raft enduring hideous agonies of famine and thirst—all this in the south Atlantic, somewhere off the coast of South America. And then, just as all of them are finally perishing from thirst, one falls overboard—and the water is fresh! They are off the mouth of the

mighty Amazon, still out of sight of land, but with the flow of the great river eddying miles out into the ocean. Then after the *Chancellor* came *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*—Captain Nemo and the first submarine; *The Mysterious Island*—a grand tale; *The English at the North Pole*; *Around the World in Eighty Days*; *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (my! how that boiling lava seethed up around their frail copper-sheathed raft a thousand miles under the earth's crust!); *From the Earth to the Moon*; *Michael Strogoff* (years later I saw this superb Russian hero on the stage and had a thrill all over again); and so on through the whole lot.

Now as to Charles Dickens, my friends in England declare that of all the early Victorian novelists, he is the only one that still commands a strong following among British youth of the present day. I am not surprised: my generation took Dickens seriously and continuously. I had reached the mature age of ten when I was introduced to him through the pages of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. It was a cheap paper edition, poor type with folio pages. But to an eager boy Little Nell was a living creature. Then followed in order *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two*

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Cities, Dombey and Son, and so on, winding up with the unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Half a century is a long time to look back, and why I should have cluttered up my memory with the order in which I read my first six volumes of Dickens is a mystery.

After Dickens, in my scheme of things, came James Fenimore Cooper and Scott, all mixed up together, rather badly assorted, to tell the truth. *The Spy* was my first essay in Cooper and I still think it his best. Living on the Hudson River and knowing something of its western hinterland from summer visits to ancestral haunts in Delaware and Schoharie counties, the scene of many of the Cooper tales came close home to me, and gave me thrills which far more than offset the ponderous moralizing of many of his chief characters.

I think I took Sir Walter Scott with a considerable sense of duty as well as pleasure. *Ivanhoe*, of course, came first and *Quentin Durward* second. Neither the dark-eyed beauty Rebecca nor the fair Rowena ever ravished me exactly, and Front-de-Boeuf was hardly my idea of heavy villain, even in the Age of Chivalry. Nevertheless, I must confess myself upholding the Scott tradition and when the time came, not long after college,

to go abroad I chose an old, uncomfortable (three thousand tons only) Anchor Line vessel—the *Anchoria* (sixty-five dollars first cabin, one way) to take me direct to Glasgow. And Edinburgh the next day and Abbotsford the day after that—a good long day there, too. Thirty years later I went there for an hour and could hardly stand it. But on that memorable first trip, every stone was a memory, the rustling of every curtain a whisper from the Middle Ages.

Now, with a pernicious conscience I had a wretched habit of reading every word in a book. So when I came to the Bible (as I have already mentioned earlier in this volume), I read that through twice before I was fourteen, only omitting portions of the Kings and Chronicles on the second trip. What a wicked waste! How much better, had I let the ancient Hebrew sovereigns go soak and learned great passages of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the Psalms and the New Testament!

Uncle Tom's Cabin my mother started reading aloud to me as a sort of bedtime story. But the tale was blood-curdling and the reading out loud far too slow, so I finished it in a hurry by myself. Then on the theory of "thorough," I got hold of Harriet Beecher Stowe's other

books. But as we all know none could hold a candle to *Uncle Tom*. Even *Dred, a Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, whose title was most alluring, failed to terrify.

Bret Harte was a favorite of ours among short story writers. Who could ever ask for two better ones than *The Luck of Roaring Camp* and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat"? And his "Plain Language from Truthful James," read to me by my mother, is one of my earliest recollections.

Some of the other Victorian novelists in due course followed my Dickens and my Scott. Thackeray was the first and George Eliot the second. The Merediths and the Hardys came only after I was through college. Thackeray and Eliot, both consumed practically in toto, filled in a considerable part of those middle distance years from fifteen to nineteen.

The life of school and college boys and girls fifty years ago was far less rushed than today. One did not have to be going every minute. In summer we used to think that half the day was enough for exercise, tennis or boating or scrambling up the foothills of the Catskills. And as the afternoons had more hours for exercise, my brother and sister and I used to put in the mornings

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reading. Well, obviously in the course of long summer vacations, prep school and college, if one puts in the mornings reading for three hours a day, one can cover considerable ground.

For me that ground was all of Thackeray, the same of Eliot and Defoe, Bulwer-Lytton (does any one live who has not read *The Last Days of Pompeii*?), with a lot of other things thrown in, like Fielding with his *Tom Jones* (terribly improper in those days), and Victor Hugo, mostly in translation, I am sorry to say. But his *Ninety-Three* and his five full volumes of *Les Misérables* made thrilling reading for any youth in his teens. Of course, too, those were the days of General Lew Wallace and his *Ben-Hur, a Tale of the Christ*, and then *The Fair God*. In the late eighties *Ben-Hur* was almost as much in vogue as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the fifties. For millions of churchgoing people who had always looked askance at novel reading, *Ben-Hur* was the book that broke the ice and showed them that romance in which Biblical characters figured could be improving as well as delightful.

The name of Victor Hugo calls up fresh youthful memories, for it was a passage from his description of

the Battle of Waterloo that served me in my first school declamation contest. (Declamation contests had a great vogue when I was a boy.) I can still recall those rolling, sonorous lines of Hugo—a bad translation very likely, but good enough for me: “A few squares of the Old Guard, immovable amid the flow of the rout as rocks in running water, held out till night. Night coming on, and death also, they awaited the double terror which was surrounding them. Ulm, Wagram, Jena, Friedland were dying with them,” and so on. And then at the end, when Hugo pictures the defeated Bonaparte returning alone late that night to the scene of his disaster—“It was Napoleon—endeavoring to advance again—mighty somnambulist of a vanished dream!”

It was during those same long summer holidays that we covered the other books “thrown in,” to which I have just alluded. First came Charles Kingsley (*Water Babies*, of course long years before) with his perfectly grand *Westward Ho!* and the puissant Amyas Leigh; followed by *Hereward the Wake*, that tale of early England. After him Wilkie Collins—*The Moonstone*, *The Woman in White*, and other real thrillers; and all of our own Edgar Allan Poe, still unsurpassable. In these

present days I hear little mention of Charles Reade, but I am sure young people must still devour *The Cloister and the Hearth*, just as we did; closely followed by *Hard Cash*, *It Is Never Too Late to Mend*, and others. And then of course Nathaniel Hawthorne. There was a quality, an atmosphere about his books that even as a youth I had detected in no others I had ever read. *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Marble Faun*—all of them appealing and unforgettable.

Time seemed almost everlasting in those carefree days, and thrice I started the summer with *Vanity Fair* and made it cover five or six mornings. Everyone must have his favorite book which, at least in his younger days before the years press down, he reads again and again. So if the roll were called and *Vanity Fair* named, I should always declare "*Adsum*." How many times—and never without youthful emotion—had I read that passage: "No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart."

Of the books which I read again and again another was Blackmore's romantic *Lorna Doone*. I must say that the

Doone country, when one visits it now on a placid July day, looks neither so formidable nor perhaps so romantic as Blackmore pictured it. But why spoil that first, fine, careless rapture of youth, fired by the matchless Lorna?

It is obvious that even for a boy my reading was pretty much one-sided—novels and romances having a heavily preponderating place. In those days there wasn't much science that was available for growing youth to read, and modern biography hadn't been invented. But certainly I ought to have plodded through more history. Perhaps, however, for that age romance was not so bad—certainly if one's after life was to be filled with the pressure of daily affairs. At any rate, one gathered, as the poet says, a sense of life, lovely and intense.

Those college and post-college years also of course marked the time when Kipling and Stevenson came into their own. It was a cold winter morning in my sophomore year that one of my friends marched into my chilly room in Thayer Hall, threw a volume down on my desk, and said, "There's a new young English writer and I'll bet he makes his mark." The book was Kipling's *The Light That Failed*. In American circles that piece of Kipling's work had seemed to attract attention even before his Indian tales.

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In these later days we all recall that at Kipling's death in 1936, George Bernard Shaw said of him rather cruelly: "He never grew up—he began by being behind the times." Well, Kipling may have been the apotheosis of British imperialism. But that did not bother me. For youths of my day he was the great storyteller, and to us he opened a wonderland of Indian pomp and ceremony, cruelty and cynicism, rajahs and natives; famine, heat, mystery, and squalor, all flowing by in a turbulent stream of color—with the never-changing majesty of the Himalayan peaks, snowy forever in the towering fastnesses of the North. That was the glowing impression that Kipling made upon the eagerness of the youth of my time. Thus to us and our like nobody was his match until Joseph Conrad, of a far different order of genius, came up over the horizon.

As to our American poets of the last century I did not do well. Longfellow had a small place, but Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Byrant, and the lusty Walt Whitman, almost none. Not until I went away to school did I get any Emerson, and then it was his essays rather than his verses. No, as to verse our household contented itself largely with Sir Walter Scott, ("The stag at eve had drunk his fill," young Lochinvar, "so faithful in love and

so dauntless in war," and so on), with the *Lays* of Macaulay and with Tennyson, for we certainly lived in a "kind-hearts-are-more-than-coronets" atmosphere. We had so much of Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, and the Psalms poured out upon us that my father might have felt we had no need for modern poetry.

Since those early years I have never had such prolonged periods for reading. Even good summer holidays or long Pacific voyages have been punctuated with affairs that interrupt and distract. Thus while I have all my life kept pegging away at books, ancient and modern, I can never be glad enough that I was brought up from my earliest years to a habit of reading that, luckily enough, took me over a lot of ground in the first two decades of my life. But who can ever recapture those first raptures of an eager boy, so keen to get through his first reading of *The Spy* or of *Oliver Twist* that he would carry the book all over the house with him, snatching sentences at odd moments, the last thing to lay down beside his bed at night, the first to take up with the morning sun?

Revolutionary Tales, the River and the Mountains

LONG BEFORE I READ OF THE HUDSON IN REVOLUTIONARY days, as narrated in Charles C. Coffin's *Boys of '76* which enthralled me, my father had told me as a small boy much about the campaigns that had been fought from Manhattan Island all the way up through the highlands, beyond the Mohawk and finally to Saratoga. It was there in 1777 that the British general, "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne, who was a much greater success as poet and playwright than as soldier, with all his hated Hessian levies, had been surrounded and forced to surrender his army to the Yankees, the first great triumph of the Americans in the War for Independence. In fact, some his-

torians have included the struggle and surrender at Saratoga as among the ten most important battles in world history.

It so happened that my father as a small boy had sat by the side of his great-grandfather, William Lamont, and listened to the tale the old gentleman, then almost ninety, told him of that selfsame campaign. For in 1776, a sturdy young man of twenty, he had trudged away from his father's (Robert's) farm at North Hillsdale in Columbia County and enlisted as a private in the Continental army, and had marchēd and fought and finally seen with his own eyes the surrender of the scarlet-clad British forces under Burgoyne. We lived for three years at Rondout, the river portion of old Kingston that had been burned by the British; and not so very far down the west bank of the river was West Point, the scene of Benedict Arnold's treachery.

All these Revolutionary tales as related by my father stirred my child's imagination so much that, with my mother's scores of used-up spools, which were the only toy soldiers I ever had, I fought over and over again all those old-time battles, from Concord and Lexington right down to Yorktown. I never had to study our

colonial or Revolutionary history from books—I knew it by heart by the time I was ten years old.

And then, delight of delights: my parents took me down to Newburgh to witness the one-hundredth anniversary of Washington's farewell to his army. There was a parade with soldiers in the blue and buff of the Continental army, fife and drum corps Yankee Doodling with great spirit, and as a climax a pageant and reproduction of Washington grouped among his officers, delivering his Farewell Address—that text used and also misused by so many of our modern-day orators. But in my youthful days the question of close collaboration with peaceful, friendly nations overseas was quiescent. We on our side of the Atlantic had no fear of attack from aggressive tyrants whose efforts to crush and dominate less warlike nations have made a sorry world for us since 1914.

Coming back from world wars to the Hudson River, and to my present home on the northerly escarpment of the Palisades, I may explain that that whole region is filled with local Revolutionary history. Only a half mile west, at Tappan, still stands in excellent state of preservation the headquarters that Washington occu-

pied. Not far away is the small gray stone building where Major André was confined until his execution as a British spy, after being caught at Tarrytown across the river. Lord Cornwallis' headquarters are only a few miles down on the west bank.

Right below us at the foot of the steep descent from the summit of the Palisades lies the little hamlet of Sneden's Landing. It gained its name from the sturdy Molly Sneden who, according to the story, rowed General Washington across the Hudson after the unhappy battle that, with few and ill-trained troops, he fought at White Plains. The transfer of Washington's forces across the river marked the start of his New Jersey campaign, which, winding up with his Christmas night (1776) surprise attack at Trenton, achieved real success.

To me this area, so near Manhattan Island in point of time, so far removed in atmosphere, has a peculiar attraction. The spring and autumn days alternating in brilliant sunshine and haze, the vast stretches of the river to the north, and the magnificent rampart of the Palisades are surrounded with happy memories, many of them vivid and some dim and misty as are the legends of Sleepy Hollow just across the river.

My parsonage days on the Hudson were, however, many miles to the north. In fact, all my father's up-river pastorates had Albany for their metropolis. That was where the huge sprawling pile of a capitol, built through decades notorious for their scandal and graft, dominated the slope west from the river. Washington was far away but Albany with its legislators and governors was close at hand. It was the northern terminus of the great Hudson River day and night boats. I can see them now—the night boats as in the late twilight they moved down the river with all their lights aglow in clear sight from the parsonage porch.

The names of these floating palaces, as they were called then, stick in my memory—the *Dean Richmond* and the *Daniel Drew*. The late Mr. Drew's repute in business affairs was hardly savory but in his day he did much for transportation on river and land. The day boats were the *C. Vibbard*, the *Albany*, and the *New York*, all long since gone to the junk heap. But they were fast and comfortable and each year bore thousands of New Yorkers north to Albany, whence they would scatter to their holiday abodes.

Albany was the gathering place for all up-river folk.

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It was there that my elder brother and sister went to school preparatory for college. There we were taken to buy our modest wardrobes. Every morning from spring till late autumn the *City of Hudson*, a small one-stack steamer, would leave its wharf at Catskill at 7 A.M., stop at the little river towns, Coxsackie and Coeymans, and at the more populous Hudson; arrive at Albany at ten. It would gather its passengers again at four in the afternoon for the return trip. For me that was always an adventurous and delightful journey. One of my father's five-brothers lived in Albany and his family of six bright children was always another attraction.

When we finally moved further down the river to Rondout, only eighty-eight miles from New York, the center of gravity swung south and New York City became the magnet. It was from Rondout that the queen of all the river steamers plied to New York and back each weekday till winter came. The *Mary Powell*, built in 1861, had kept her supremacy for speed from that time until thirty years later, in the days when we became passengers on an occasional round trip to the great city.

The river was always there but always changing. In the summer we swam in it, in winter skated on it. Small

boat sailing was not much in vogue—there were too many sudden squalls swooping down from the mountains. But we did a lot of rowing both on the Hudson and on some of its lovely tributaries. The creek that found its way into the river at Saugerties was the most charming of these, coursing its way through rocky gorges, filled with caves that we explored, and then finally reaching the Hudson over a waterfall. In the spring the running of the shad up the river was always a sight, and if we happened to meet the fishermen rowing in to the wharf with their crowded nets we could always buy a big shad for twenty-five cents. But when the ice broke up, perhaps not till March on these northern reaches, the river was quite another story. Great floes and cakes of ice went grinding up and down the waters with the ebb and flow of the tides, and crossing the stream to get to the Hudson River Railroad was an adventure.

Just at the breakup of the river ice late one winter day at Saugerties, that charming, Dutch-named town, my mother, despite our pleas, determined to cross in order to take a train (the West Shore Railroad was not yet in operation) to New York for the funeral of a greatly be-

loved old aunt of hers. Four men put a heavy rowboat on light runners, packed my mother in the bottom of the boat, and shoved out from the lighthouse point on our side of the river. So long as the ice held they poled the boat on runners. When it plunged into the water they rowed it. From the parsonage porch, a half mile away as the crow flies, we gazed with anxious eyes as the big cakes of ice lunged against the sides of the frail craft. Finally we heaved a sigh of relief as we saw the crew thread its way through what seemed to us small icebergs and land Mother on the eastern shore near the railway station.

The wintertime Hudson had many attractions, but it was the river in its spring and autumn moods that was most celebrated by both painters and writers. The Hudson River School of Artists, led by Thomas Cole, later by George Innes, Frederick E. Church, and a half score others, had immense vogue in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Americans, especially citizens of New York State, were proud of their mountain-river, as they called it. They loved to see it and all its background depicted on canvas—in the lower reaches of the stream the Palisades and then the highlands, in the

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upper reaches the rugged slopes of the Catskill Mountains.

While in my boyhood the demand for the paintings of the Hudson River artists had begun to fade out, earlier, for two score years or more, the best productions of these painters were eagerly sought by patrons of native American art. One still sees these pictures now and then, but only as examples of a bygone age when America was bursting into bloom and when her people were eager to see reproductions of her natural beauties. This was only a little later than the time when Washington Irving was ruling over the Hudson as its leading man of letters, and was gathering about his hospitable hearth at his Irvington "Sunnyside" many of the mighty figures in the American world of letters of that same Victorian age of the nineteenth century.

I have spoken of the comfort that my mother took in those weeks before I was born in looking beyond the waters of the Hudson to the distant Catskill Mountains. Perhaps there was born in me a feeling for the mountains and water that has stayed with me all my years. Throughout my boyhood they were together the background of all our life out of doors. To this day as I jot

MY BOYHOOD IN A PARSONAGE

down these notes I look from my porch on the tip of the Palisades north across the Tappan Zee, and on clear days far beyond into the huge rounded hills that are the highlands of the Hudson, or if it is midsummer I may be sitting at my farm on Penobscot Bay and looking west across the dancing waters to the long blue line of the Camden Mountains, with the stately Mount Megunticook as their center and pivot.

I must not let myself grow too sentimental over mountains, sea, and sky, but for me on my early trips abroad, like so many other Americans, the Scottish Highlands, the Swiss Alps, and the Dolomites had irresistible attraction. And then, when my children grew a bit older, my wife and I took the family on long summer camping trips to the Rocky Mountains, in Montana, in Idaho, to the Cascades in Oregon, followed only a few years ago by a pack-train trip in the High Sierras. Fujiyama, its summit glittering above the clouds to meet our eye fifty miles out at sea as we plowed the Pacific en route to Japan. And Table Mountain, standing bold and clear ten hours' sail away at the end of the long voyage from Southampton to Cape Town. The mountains and the waters have seemed to be with me all through life, in

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boyhood, in the middle years, and then in the still crowded years moving toward the close—those fleeting days when almost all men are alike in the constant endeavor to glimpse what is beyond the world's end!

Methodism in America and in My Family

I WOULD NOT FOR A MOMENT GIVE THE IMPRESSION that the life of the preacher and of his family was beset with afflictions. On the contrary, in general we lived a serene and happy, yes, a joyous life. That is clear to me now, gazing back over more than fifty crowded years, and such phases of Methodist parsonage life as I relate fall into their place as amusing rather than annoying.

But the ways of the communities where we dwelt were exceedingly simple and restricted; the views of most of the people necessarily limited and overlaid by a stern Fundamentalism that might have suited the Puritan fathers but certainly, I believe, was never the intent

of those wise and kindly brothers who founded Methodism, John and Charles Wesley. (Even now I could almost sketch the features of the two brothers as during my boyhood years they looked benignly down upon us from steel engravings on the walls of my father's study.) They were both priests of the Church of England and John Wesley especially clung to its forms. But both brothers and their followers were determined, in their worship, to find a way to bring the poorer people in the community to realize a sense of closer contact with God, "loving God with an undivided heart," as John Wesley put it.

Even so, the Wesleys in their new denomination retained much of the old established structure. It was the "*Methodist Episcopal*" church that they founded. It had a creed and a catechism modeled largely on that of the Church of England, and its affairs were administered by a board of bishops. But when Methodism developed in America it seemed to take on a stricter cast. It bristled with "Don'ts."

Cards and dancing were prohibited as the invention of the Evil One. My enterprising and somewhat rebellious elder brother, on his first vacation home from prepara-

tory school at Albany, brought with him fifty-two white pasteboard cards, duly inscribed in his own hand with the nomenclature of playing cards. It was with those cards that I was given my first lesson in whist. As for dancing, if a young Methodist swain had ever suggested that the way to hold a woman was by her waist, he would have been thought fit only for outer darkness.

Methodism was first brought to America about the middle of the eighteenth century. But fifty or seventy-five years later when it had found a place for itself in this country, it drew to its embrace, among others, many zealots. And zealots are apt to be narrow and extreme. The stay of the Wesley brothers in America had been brief and perhaps their converts here did not realize what a robust individual, free from dogmatism, the leader, John Wesley, was.

What an extraordinarily powerful character he was! That is a pleasing picture of him beginning his revival with a small but eager group of Oxford students. For sixty years he gladly endured hardship and traveled up and down the length of the land in Great Britain and even in Ireland, interpreting the words and life of Christ to thousands of eager listeners. So strong and deter-

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mined was he that up to within about a fortnight of his death at the advanced age of eighty-eight he was still active, preaching and writing and translating hymns from medieval European sources. All the evangelical denominations have for generations past all over the world been singing Charles Wesley's:—

Jesu, Lover of my soul
Let me to Thy bosom fly
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.

My father's people had for two or three generations been of the Methodist persuasion, my mother's not quite so long. On her mother's side her grandparents, born in County Armagh in the north of Ireland, had been Scotch Presbyterians. They seem to have missed all the scores of visits that John Wesley paid to that island, making nothing of the rigors and tempests of the Irish Sea. Both of them—James Ferguson, born in 1767, and Jane Dunshee, born seven years later—embarked with four hundred thirty others for the New World in 1794 in the good ship *Alexander*, four hundred tons burden, Captain Coffin of Hudson, New York, commanding.

MY BOYHOOD IN A PARSONAGE

They first met on the ship, and, youthful and eager and lonely, they fell in love. Promptly on their arrival they were married. After a few years in New York City they moved to the glades and uplands of Delaware County, settled down, and reared twelve children in the way of the Lord. Soon they became enthusiastic members of the Methodist church. The two eldest sons enlisted in the War of 1812. Of the other brothers, three became preachers in the Methodist church, two of them attaining distinction in their calling.

Both these two great-uncles were ardent Methodists of the circuit-riding era. But they were saved from asceticism because of their delightful, frequently jovial, sense of humor. They were both mighty in the word of God, both powerful singers and very popular. My Great-Uncle Samuel, whom I never saw, but an excellent portrait of whom I treasure, was indefatigable in the important posts to which he was assigned. About 1850, his health failing, he and his brother Sandford founded a little village that was named after them, Fergusenville, in one of the lovely valleys of Delaware County, and established there a large seminary for boys and girls, which flourished through the time of my boyhood.



MY GREAT-UNCLE SAMUEL D.
FERGUSON



MY GREAT-AUNT HANNAH ANN
JAYNE, WIFE OF SAMUEL D.
FERGUSON

METHODISM IN AMERICA

But Great-Uncle Samuel, broken down from overwork, did not long survive, and Sandford returned to active service in the Methodist ministry. He, whom I remember well, believed, like his brother, that life was made to be a thing not of gloom but of joy. That was the doctrine that he lived and preached. My mother was his favorite niece, and I used to love his frequent visits. He was mad about the game of croquet and would play up to nine or ten o'clock at night, hanging little lanterns on the wickets to guide the players. Uncle Sandford was also a great smoker (cigarettes had not been invented in those days) and altogether a very human person. He and my mother used to have many a quiet laugh over his younger sister Nancy, an independent-minded person who decided that she fancied tobacco, too, and would in the seclusion of her room fill a little clay pipe and smoke it.

The vigor of character that these great-uncles and aunts of mine had made a deep impression upon me, and their personalities and the memories of them that my mother used to relate remain with me to this day. With that Scotch-Irish humor of theirs, with their generosity of intellect and approach, their Old World courtesy and

tact, they seemed to draw people to them and to be able to attain distinction in any walk of life that they chose to follow.

My mother had always been entranced with her Aunt Nancy, who, well-educated herself, set up a select school for girls in West 9th Street in New York City, where my mother—whose own mother, Nancy's younger sister, had died when Mother was only nine—went to school. My mother used to talk about the picnic excursions that the students would take with their teachers to the old Croton Reservoir at 42nd Street, now the site of the public library and Bryant Park.

In those days it was so far uptown that there were few if any dwellings there—the rest, field and meadow. Later, many of Aunt Nancy's pupils went as students to the academy at Fergusonville, which my mother attended when she was in her teens. In my early boyhood we used to spend a part of our summers there, the nights always cool, and then drive ten miles up the valley for a visit to my father's people at Charlotteville.

Not only were the Fergusons, my mother's people on her mother's side, active Methodists, but on her father's side that was the case also. I remember well that grand-

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father of mine, Walter Peter Jayne, who used to visit my mother frequently. He was, as my father has put it in his own recollections, "a man of quick, keen mind and charming disposition." When he was twenty-eight years old, being a printer by trade and with an excellent mastery of English composition, he was invited by the Methodist Church Missionary Society to go with a fresh band of missionaries to Liberia on the west coast of Africa, which had already begun to figure as an asylum for slaves released or escaped from the southern states.

So Grandfather Jayne, leaving behind a wife and two children (my mother not yet born), sailed away with a score or more of others and settled down in Monrovia, the small settlement in Liberia, as editor and publisher of a little missionary journal entitled *Africa's Luminary*. But the missionary group, while amply endowed with piety and zeal, were without medical help. Tropical fever seized them and before two years had passed they had all died save my grandfather and two others, who were able to hail a passing sail and made their way back to the States. Grandfather Jayne kept a large folio-size journal of his Liberian adventure. I read its grim pages

years ago, and it must be somewhere in my attic now.

That grandfather of mine had come of rather venturesome stock. Pure English it was, and they had a way of passing the records down from father to son. Thus we know that grandfather's first ancestor to come to this country was his great-great-grandfather, William, who reached here in 1678. Born at Bristol in 1618, William, like his father before him, went to Oxford, turned into a dissenter, and was expelled from the university. He became a Puritan preacher and in the English civil war was one of Cromwell's Roundhead chaplains. Finding the political climate of the Restoration unwholesome for him, he finally, after some years as a widower, emigrated to America, and at the age of sixty-four married Annie Briggs, aged twenty-two, who bestowed upon him seven sturdy sons, the youngest born when his sire was eighty-two. Indeed, the Jaynes had a certain fervor and passion about them not confined to religion! But years before his death in 1714 at the age of ninety-six, he renewed his Puritan zeal of the Cromwell days and settled down as dominie of the little Presbyterian church at Setauket, Long Island, where I have read the perfectly legible inscription on his tomb:

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HERE LYES Y BODY OF

WILLIAM JAYNE

BORN AT BRISTOL ENG.

JANY 25TH, 1618

DEC'D MARCH Y 24TH, 1714

The Reverend William Jayne's descendants became largely seafaring men in the coastwise trade which was active in those days, and my great-grandfather, Peter Jayne, made bequests in his will (1813) of his "Sloop Teaser of Smithtown" and the "Sloop July Ann." All these data and a good deal more were gathered and set down by my careful father, and in these notes I have been relying on his record; my train of thought having been started by my recollection of my own grandfather's missionary expedition to West Africa under the auspices of the Methodist church.

It is no part of my task to write of church history, but I have always been interested as to whence the name of the Methodist denomination was derived. Centuries before John and Charles Wesley were ever heard of, indeed far back in the Middle Ages, there began to be a certain turning away from the formal scholasticism of the

church. The logicians gave way a trifle before the growing body of mystics who were responding to the hitherto inarticulate souls, yearning for some living word that would carry them out of themselves; for the mystics had begun to teach that the one thing needful was for each soul to creep as closely as it could into the bosom of Eternal Love—a tenet to which John Wesley's declaration that I have quoted above was closely akin.

One of the most eminent Methodist divines in New York City—and I doubt not his authority—says that the name Methodist arose from the methodical religious practices of the “Holy Club” at Oxford. This was, he explains, the group to which John and Charles Wesley belonged and their fellow students gave them this label. Though John Wesley was opposed to denominational titles and called his group the “United Society” he nevertheless accepted the term Methodist.

That is all I have to say about Methodism among my forebears and it is enough.

Early Presidential Campaigns

HELD IN MY FATHER'S ARMS, I REMEMBER WATCHING WITH delight my first political torchlight procession. This was at Catskill in 1876 and I was about six years old. It was the campaign between Tilden, governor of New York State, and Hendricks, who were Democrats, and Hayes and Wheeler, who were Republicans. Samuel J. Tilden, Democrat though he was, had waged relentless war on Tammany Hall and especially against "Bill" Tweed, its disreputable leader, who, with his gang in control of the municipal administration for years, had been reputedly guilty of looting New York City's treasury of at least fifty million dollars.

Thomas Nast, the most redoubtable political cartoonist that this country has ever seen, contributed

enormously to Tilden's reform effort and to Tweed's downfall by his merciless pictures in *Harper's Weekly*. That publication was an important part of my family's education in public affairs, and Nast's weekly diatribes in drawing were awaited with breathless interest. Never in my later years, having passed through several municipal reform campaigns in New York City, have I seen anything like the public excitement aroused by the Tweed scandals.

Far up the Hudson, in the small town where we dwelt, it penetrated into our quiet and became a part of the parsonage's daily discussions. Thus I gained an early impression of the seamier side of Tammany Hall. Long before the crooked "Boss" Tweed had been brought to book, Nast had constantly depicted him, as he declared that he should be, clad in broad convict stripes with large signs of Sing Sing set up in the background.

To return to that presidential campaign of 1876, at first Tilden seemed to be elected, but two sets of returns had been received from four of the states and the Electoral Commission reached a decision whereby the balance was swung the other way. I recall the great excitement over this episode, but Governor Tilden, a



MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER, WALTER
PETER JAYNE



MY GREAT-UNCLE ADDISON ALFRED JAYNE

ABOUT THE TIME OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

patriotic citizen, accepted the verdict promptly and serious trouble was avoided. Those years were still close enough to the Civil War to make the soldier vote, as now, a big factor.

Hayes, while he had been a good governor of Ohio, had never been a national figure, but he had been a brigadier general in the Civil War. He made an excellent executive but, astonishingly, refused to run for a second term. So in 1880, still only fifteen years after the war, we had as candidates military veterans from both sides: General Garfield, Republican, from Ohio, and General Winfield Scott Hancock, Democrat, from Pennsylvania. Hancock was a superb-looking military figure, but he was a weak candidate and was readily defeated.

I was too busy at play to remember that campaign, but I recall well the hush and anguish that fell upon the country when, in the following summer, President Garfield was fatally shot by a crazy assassin. I can hear the prayers that my father offered from the pulpit Sunday after Sunday for the President's recovery. And there comes back as if it were yesterday the September morning in 1881 when my father walked up the front path to the parsonage, bearing the *New York Tribune*,

with heavy black mourning borders, telling us of the death of "our martyred President."

Garfield had been a gallant figure. He had fought an heroic fight for life all during the heat of a Washington summer that had no air-conditioning processes or electric fans to help. With our modern surgery and antisepsis, an operation would have extracted the bullet from his abdomen. But in those days the risk was too great. President Garfield had been a student at Williams College and it was he who had sagely remarked that if a student could only sit on a log whittling with President Mark Hopkins, his conversation and philosophy of life would give the boy the best education he could ever get.

When President Garfield, who for years had been more or less in the public eye, died he was succeeded by Vice President Chester Alan Arthur, a well-bred individual who had taken part in New York State politics in a silk-stockings sort of a way, his highest previous office being Collector of the Port of New York. Everybody at once was inclined to say: "Oh, Arthur! Well, he's no great shakes." Yet in his own quiet but perfectly firm way, President Arthur proved an excellent even if never exciting President. He sturdily ignored the cries for

office made by the New York machine Republicans, and fulfilled the tradition that the American democracy functions well in a crisis and that a man rises to his best when heavy responsibility is thrust upon him.

The point of all this is, as I have said before, to recall the serenity of our American days in those times. We were far removed from foreign threat. We were living in the Age of Innocence. Frontiers were expanding, trade was increasing, industry—though we had not yet reached mass production—was moving steadily ahead, and the simple, homely life of our population that was so largely farming and rural pursued the even tenor of its way. Our greatest excitements were the Fourth of July and the four-year procession of the presidential equinoxes.

Immigrants from all over the continent of Europe were pouring in upon us, helping build our railways and penetrating to the confines of every state. I had my first glimpse of Italians when the contractors building the West Shore Railroad brought over thousands of them, and we boys used to go up to watch them at work. As a people we were almost wholly taken up with absorbing new citizens like these, with welding ourselves into

a single, undivided nation of many races, with developing our agriculture and industry so that it could readily soak up all this new manpower and at the same time furnish us a higher standard of daily living.

With this gigantic task on our hands of building up a great nation-state, is it any wonder that we had little time or thought as to America's place in the world? We had not begun to philosophize on international relations, and at least a quarter of a century had to elapse before World War I woke us up and began to give us a glimmering of the fact that no one nation of the world can fall in danger of losing its liberty without our own becoming thereby imperiled almost overnight. Even World War I failed to teach us that lesson at all thoroughly. Has World War II, which has dissipated distance and geographically made us neighbors of all peoples all over the world—has that desperate struggle led us Americans at last to give unequivocal answer to the insistent and inescapable question: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

My Brother and Sister

IN THE FOREGOING PAGES I HAVE SPOKEN MORE THAN once of my father and my mother and of the quality of the lives that they led. Their impression grew slowly on me with youth and manhood and, after these many decades crowded with active affairs as contrasted with their simple but useful lives, I hold to it more strongly than ever. In this small volume I wish to add a word or two about my elder brother and sister.

I will speak briefly first of my sister Lucy, named after my father's eldest sister who, he often remarked, looked after him as tenderly as my own sister, three and one-half years my senior, looked after me as a small boy. Lucy, like me, was always immensely stimulated by our elder brother, Hammond, whose lead we followed. She

played a quieter and more modest role in the affairs of the family, but an effective one. She came by a studious and serious mind from my father, and had the power of close application. Thus she was always near the head of her classes, but gained that well-deserved place more from constant and well-ordered diligence than from brilliant essay.

Lucy had the same traits of steadiness and sound judgment that my father had. Added to that in full measure was the capacity of prudent and effective management that my mother showed. She was always, as long as she stayed under the parsonage roof, an immense aid to the dominie and his wife, not merely in the ordering of our simple household, but in all the social and sometimes complex relations, running to occasional jealousies, that naturally marked some of those congregations that my father served. She was even-tempered and tactful, but when the times needed it she would plainly show the sense of righteous indignation that any instance of unkindness or injustice aroused in her. The most amiable of beings in the even affairs of daily existence, she had a good touch of the Scotch-Irish in her that came down straight from our mother's side.

MY BROTHER AND SISTER

Our early lives, my sister's life, in a country parsonage were greatly restricted by various denominational taboos, and in fact by the limited existence everyone must live in a community so far removed and sheltered as ours was from the great currents of the world. Yet my sister, who aside from absences at preparatory school and college lived at home until her marriage at twenty-three years of age, never for a moment allowed the limitations upon her daily life to crib or confine her own activities in mind or action. Like my brother before her, she was always striving to attain the best that offered in books and in the realm of scientific and sociological achievement, in which latter field she was active for years subsequent to her happy marriage. Through all her girlhood and later days in and out of the parsonage she was never bothered by "what the neighbors would think." Thus the fear that stifles souls never came to oppress her.

These sketches have to do primarily with my boyhood in a parsonage. Hence I shall not attempt to write of my sister's later life nor to describe the friendship between us that, up to the day of her death, had grown closer each year since we had had to bear together our irreparable loss in the death of our elder brother, and then the

natural sadness that comes when with the years our beloved parents are finally gathered to their fathers—

For all His saints who from their labors rest.

My brother, Hammond, almost seven years older than I, was from my earliest memory a source of the greatest joy and even inspiration to his younger sister and brother. In all our youthful years, in the long summer vacations and Christmas holidays, his gay spirits, his incomparable enthusiasms, his abounding energy—which he maintained almost to the day of his death in the middle forties—made us quick and alive to the world around us. He was a born leader and he led us youngsters into the jolliest sort of pastimes. It was he who introduced to us all the latest games. And perhaps more than all else it was his interest in education and his insistence upon the reading of first-class books, qualities inherited largely from my father, that gave us our greatest ultimate satisfactions and furnished us with the background and incentive for such advance as we may have gained in the art of living. It was he who insisted that I must go to the best preparatory



MY MOTHER AND MY ELDER SISTER LUCY AS A BABY

school available and so he got me started at Phillips Exeter.

Only the other day I came across a letter yellowed with age (dated at Cambridge, April 27, 1885,) that Hammond had written when a junior at Harvard College to Sister Lucy who was then at the Albany High School preparing for Smith College. She had preserved the letter all these years, apparently because first it was so characteristic of my brother, and second it contained such good advice. Hammond had sent to Lucy a copy of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*. That was the standard anthology of verse of those days, long before the publication of the *Oxford Book of English Verse* and the numberless anthologies that have followed.

In his letter Hammond begs Lucy to read the *Golden Treasury* slowly, bit by bit, and commit to memory as many of the shorter sketches as she can. Then he proceeds to fire at her some heavy broadsides of excellent advice—a bit sweeping perhaps for a junior at Harvard but nevertheless appropriate for all time. I like the phrase where he begs her to stop "this damnable grinding at your lessons." Let me quote a few paragraphs from Hammond's letter:

When I was in the High School, I used to think myself fairly well read for my age, and, in fact, I did know as much about books as most of the fellows in my class. Yet I see now that the trouble with my present writing is simply my rank illiteracy. There are hundreds of books of which I should by this time know much; yet I am ashamed to say that I know nothing about them. I almost feel that I should be willing to have my life shortened ten years, yes, I am sure that I should, if I could go back and live over the time I have spent since my entering the High School.

I made the fatal mistake then of trying to stand well in my class at the expense of doing general reading. My standing well did me no good, yet if I had spent some of my study time in reading, I should today have been happier, and a far abler writer. There are fellows here in my class who have no more natural ability than I have, yet they surpass me, simply because they have spent so much more time than I have in reading good books. I have been doing my best to make up for my lost time; but it never can be done this side of Eternity.

I feel more strongly on this subject than on almost any other. And I am writing to you as I do, because I feel that you are making the mistake which I did. Do not try to lead your class or even to stand unusually high. You will know as much if you put less time on your lessons,

MY BROTHER AND SISTER

you will know more and be far happier if only you will read more good books than you do. . . . There is almost nothing in the way of literary success which you might not hope for, if you would stop this damnable grinding at your lessons when you have learned them, and read good books.

I hope you will take this advice as it is intended, namely to bring a good success to a sister in whose abilities I have a firm belief. Furthermore, I hope that you will not think that *I* have written anything original—I who have had but slight experience and whose judgment is not ripe. Remember that I have merely made from my own experience an application of truths which are as old as civilization.

Like my father before him, my brother was a natural teacher perhaps even more than a journalist, though he followed both callings with equal success. As a student at Harvard he was editor of *The Crimson* and of the *Harvard Lampoon*, he was Class Day Ivy Orator, and because of the unusual brilliance of his mind he was not only one of the first scholars of his class but, through his tutoring ability, was able largely to meet his own college expenses. His first newspaper work was on the *Albany Argus*, then on the *Express*, but he could not

put up with the political philosophy of William Barnes, Jr., so he lived up to Horace Greeley's advice, "Go West, young man," and betook himself first to Tacoma and then to the *Post Intelligencer* at Seattle. Reporting there a visit that President Eliot made on the alumni body, he so impressed the head of Harvard that he at once invited him to return to his college as a teacher of English. Making excellent headway there, he was called as professor of English to Brown University, and at once through his ardor and authorship of working textbooks in English composition gained a repute in the world of teaching. A few years later he was invited to take the managing editorship of the old New York *Evening Post* and when Wendell Phillips Garrison, the editor of the weekly *Nation*, died, my brother was chosen to succeed him.

In all these positions his extensive knowledge of English literature, ordered by a judgment of extraordinary balance and clarity, made him outstanding in any circle in which he moved. In the course of my life in which I have had the good fortune to come in contact with many outstanding individuals, I can say without reserve that I have never met anyone whose intellectual



MY ELDER BROTHER HAMMOND ABOUT THE TIME OF MY BIRTH

MY BROTHER AND SISTER

processes and tolerant judgments were more outstanding than my brother's. Perhaps I cannot do better in closing this tribute than to quote a paragraph from a column editorial written by Rollo Ogden for the *New York Evening Post* on the day following his death, May 6, 1909:

With the deepest sorrow and an overwhelming sense of personal loss we record the death of Mr. Hammond Lamont. . . . In educational matters he was thoroughly versed. . . . Known by a multitude of university men, he was valued by them all. But Mr. Lamont had absorbed eagerly and thought deeply about all the great questions that press upon a modern man with a soul above the clouds. In politics, in morals, in that mystery and awe of existence which we call religion, his active mind had sought out fact and built up conviction. And his intellectual honesty was so complete, his detection of fallacy and delusion so instant, his hatred of sham and lies so absolute, that for him the discovery of the truth was the same thing as embracing it, his translation of thought into motive and action being instinctive and instantaneous. It would never have been necessary for a Socrates to bid Mr. Lamont "follow the argument." He was always following it to the end, sweet or bitter. It was this intellectual

staunchness of the man, combined with his firm-fibred character and loyalty to friendship, that bound like-minded men to him with hooks of steel. . . .

I have often wondered whether I am not justified in applying to my brother, Hammond, those lines of John Bunyan's when he wrote of Mr. Valiant-For-Truth: "So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

After all these years, many of them so crowded with thrilling events that at times they have seemed to become almost a blur on the horizon, my memory of my brother, my pride in his character and accomplishment, are as fresh, as eager, as grateful as they were through all the days of my life up to his untimely death almost forty years ago.

Life and Death of Uncle Henry

AS I WAS LOOKING OVER SOME OF THESE OLD FAMILY photographs that I had not come across for many years, the memory of my Great-Uncle Henry came back to me with a rush. So here are a few paragraphs about him.

After my grandmother's early death, my mother had been cared for by her Aunt Jane. When Jane Ferguson married, rather late in life, her choice was a Methodist minister of the very old-fashioned type, William Henry—"Uncle Henry" all the family called him. Born at Sligo, Ireland, in the closing years of the eighteenth century, Uncle Henry had come to America, a poor boy in an emigrant ship. With an indifferent education, he yet felt himself drawn to the service of the Lord and as a young man had entered the ministry in the circuit-

riding era of the Methodist church. He had a sparkling blue eye, a ready Irish wit, but never attained any particular distinction in the ministry.

In middle life, having fortunately secured as a wife one of the bright, energetic women of the Ferguson family, whose ministerial brothers were, as I have related, outstanding figures in the church, he finally retired. Then he settled down in Fergusonville, where, as long as his wife lived, his little home that I visited as a child was a gathering place for many of the students at Fergusonville Academy. His merry twinkle, a delightful brogue, and his stories of Northern Ireland and of an immigrant's life forty or fifty years before were always alluring to young people.

But the years sped by, his brilliant and capable wife died, and Uncle Henry was left to live his life alone. It was when I was about nine years old that my mother had word that he had suddenly grown feeble and ailing with his eighty years plus. She promptly took the arduous winter journey to Fergusonville—by train with three changes to Schenevus and then by coach over the hill and down into the Charlotte Valley to Fergusonville. In a trice she had Uncle Henry packed up and off,

bringing him straight to the crowded, small-roomed parsonage where he lived with us for the few remaining years of his life, contributing little to the household economy beyond a welcome amiability and a kindly wit.

To the astonishment of us children when my mother and he drove up to the parsonage from the station in freezing weather, Uncle Henry was clad in his ancient shiny black suit that he had worn in the pulpit fifty years before, and on his head was clapped an enormous stovepipe hat of antique vintage and shape, with hardly a vestige of silk remaining upon it. But Uncle Henry hung it up with tender care upon the hatrack in the front hall.

Later in the evening I lifted it carefully off its hook and peeped inside. On the old yellow sweatband, still in strong legible characters, was written WILLIAM HENRY'S GOLGOTHA. I turned and twisted the hat and puzzled over that inscription. Then suddenly it came to me—"Golgotha," place of the skulls. What could be fairer than that? Uncle Henry continued to cherish that hat and wore it to every church service until he died.

Infirm as Uncle Henry was, he was yet always anxious to take some share in the household duties. "I can peel

the praties better than that hired girl of yours, Caddie," I heard him say one day to my mother. And from that time on, almost every morning he set himself down before the fire with a big dishpan of potatoes and a fierce-looking kitchen knife. He was no wasteful peeler. "You know, Tommy boy," he said to me, "spuds were all I had to eat for days at a time when I was a lad in ould Ireland. Indeed, and we had famine times there more than once!"

Now and then Uncle Henry was a bit of a trial to my father because he still longed to preach, and Father felt he must grant his wish. At other times he joined actively in the weekly prayer meetings at the church. Uncle Henry always spoke as if he had personal acquaintance with the Almighty, and he reviled Satan in like familiar terms. I remember one winter's evening at Coxsackie when my sister and I dutifully went to prayer meeting while most of the young people were out skating on the Hudson River. They had set flares upon the ice and were playing an impromptu game of hockey. Uncle Henry was politely invited by my father to lead in prayer. He promptly fell down on the knees of his old and worn black trousers and raised his voice.

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"O Lord," he announced, "there are a lot of sinful folk out there, a-cavorting on the lake [meaning the river] and O Lord, I want Thee to cast Thy eye down upon them and call them back to their rightful duties to Thy worship."

Warming to his subject, he went on in this wise: "I do not suggest that the ice be broken in twain and these sinners submerged in the waters, as Pharaoh's Egyptian hosts were overwhelmed by the Red Sea in their pursuit of Moses and the Israelites. No, God, I believe that justice be tempered with mercy. But I do say, O Lord, if necessary, smite each one a mighty blow and turn his face to the shore. Otherwise, dear Lord, they will surely get committed to the ways of the Devil. Save them, unworthy as they may be—save them from the clutches of the Evil One. Thou knowest as well as I what strength the minions of Hell can wield over weak human creatures. Only Thou canst overcome that dread Adversary. Do Thou show those misguided children the error of their ways. We rely upon Thee, O Lord, to do as I have asked. Amen!"

I noticed that my father's echoing amen was not quite so hearty as it might have been, and at home that night

after prayer meeting and after Uncle Henry had gone to bed I heard my father remark mildly to my mother: "Uncle Henry believes in an anthropomorphic God and a personal devil." It was perhaps some years later before I gained the true meaning of that Greek derivative as applied by my father to the Almighty. We all recalled more than once Uncle Henry's striking prayer about the skating party on the Hudson, and finally it became a part of the family folklore.

I have before me to this day two old manuscripts, both on sturdy linen paper that must have resisted the wear and tear of at least one hundred years, with the ink and script faded but still legible. The first one was apparently an album of brief essays and quotations garnered and written down in her own firm and clear hand by Uncle Henry's wife, Aunt Jane Henry, bearing the initials "J. H." Her first entry is a three-page essay—possibly original, I do not know—under the enticing title of "The Beginning of Evil." She traces sin in man from the start, and utters many sound precepts for its avoidance. She particularly warns against the telling of "indecent stories," declaring that such transgressions "are usually the first stage in man's progress to the most

desperate villanies." And she winds up this caution with these lines:

As by degrees from slow, though gentle rains,
Great floods arise and overflow the plains;
So men from little sins to great proceed,
Guilt grows on guilt, and crimes do crimes succeed.

A few pages later she records that "the following poetical version of some of the principal passages of the 72nd Psalm was composed and given to J. H. by her much respected friend, James Montgomery, Esq." There are several pages beginning:

Hail to the Lord's anointed
Great David's greater Son
Hail in the time appointed
His reign on earth begun.

And so Aunt Jane, of whom my mother was inordinately fond but who died before I was born, goes on with selections of verse and prose covering twenty-five or thirty pages. She had always been described to me by my mother as a cheerful, exceedingly efficient person, ac-

complishing a vast amount of work with apparently little effort. But certainly in her moments of leisure and when she was writing up this collection of literary treasures she was a bit on the misanthropic side.

Uncle Henry, on the other hand, apparently took the utmost relish in his delineations of the Evil One. Here I have before me his old manuscript sermon that begins thus:

Satan's Message or Address to His
Loyal Subjects on Earth
From the Executive Mansion in the
Infernal Regions of Perdition called Hell.

From there he begins by saying:

My dear followers and Loyal Subjects. I have thought meet and right to give you a brief account of the prosperity of my Kingdom for your present encouragement and future exertions and action. Many of you are young and destitute of a knowledge of my origin. I am not of low and mean descendance but of high, holy and Heavenly birth. Who my forefathers were I cannot tell, but from the first knowledge of my existence, I have been

of a high order of angelic beings in Heaven. And I have always been aspiring after higher.

This sermon of Uncle Henry's, written and labeled by him with his own hand, at most not later than 1844, sounds strikingly like *The Screwtape Letters* which has recently had such vogue in England and here as showing the clever approach of our modern Satan to his subjects on earth. According to Uncle Henry, the Devil winds up his exhortation, which must have taken at least an hour to deliver, with these words:

It is not my policy or benefit to give you any information respecting the state of departed Souls. I would just refer you to Christ's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke, commencing at the 23rd verse, in the New Testament. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." You will remember that this is not my parable but Christ's. And you may decide on the truth of it as you think best.

Finally, in Uncle Henry's version Satan winds up his farewell with a flourish by signing himself: "I am your faithful and indulgent Prince—Diabolus."

Winter was bursting its fetters. The bonds of the ice-chained river were being shattered with loud reports that sounded through the night. I was preparing my tiny wooden troughs to tap the fine hard maple trees that lined the road in front of the parsonage.

Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir.

Uncle Henry had been feebler than usual. The night before, my father had supported, indeed half carried, him up the stairs to his room, for he had insisted upon coming down to the first floor. But that next day he stayed in bed and had little relish for eating. Suddenly as we sat at supper that evening my mother said, "I have a feeling that Uncle Henry wants me," and she hurried up the staircase and then at once called my father.

"Finish your supper, children," he said to my sister and me as he started up the stairs, and we could hear his footsteps moving across to Uncle Henry's bed. So when supper was finished my sister and I, feeling alone, crept up the stairs and stood upon the landing. Uncle Henry's breathing, which had been labored, was easier, and

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Mother was sitting by his bed with his hand in hers. "Hold me tight, Caddie girl," he murmured in his cracked and feeble voice, "for I am slipping fast."

Then a few moments more and we could hear Father easing the old gentleman back on the pillows. Suddenly Uncle Henry's thin voice rang out, quavering but clear and with a note of triumph in it: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

A long breath, a whisper, a sigh, and Uncle Henry had gone to his eternal reward.

CHAPTER XVI

My First Year at Prep School

PERHAPS AS FITTING A TIME AS ANY TO WIND UP THESE reminiscences of my boyhood is my departure from home for school and college. It was on a bright morning in early September that my father and I set out on the day-and-a-half journey to New Hampshire. My brother, Hammond, had testified that the best prepared boys in his class at Harvard had come from the Phillips Exeter Academy, and so to Exeter I went. My father was troubled over the expense, and my mother filled with tenderness and concern to have me go so far away when I was not yet fourteen. But I was duly entered and assigned to a tiny, dormer-windowed room on the fourth floor of Gorham Hall, a village inn, a few floors of which the academy had rented as a dormitory for some of the

students. I took my meals at Abbot Hall, the only dormitory that the academy then owned outright.

My father was much pleased with the personalities of Professor George A. Wentworth, that distinguished mathematician and author of many textbooks, and of Professor Bradbury Longfellow Cilley, head of the Greek Department, in whom my father found a congenial spirit. Both these teachers had been graduated from Harvard in the Class of '58, two years after my father took his degree from Union College.

Phillips Exeter was a new and far wider world, boys there from all over the country, a truly national school as it always has been. It was, fortunately for me, thoroughly democratic. The fact that I had no money to spend was never a handicap, socially or in any other way. Just as many of the school leaders were scholarship boys as not. So I readily settled down in a congenial atmosphere. The whole idea of the school was and had been for the one hundred years of its existence hard and vigorous work. If there were any slackers they did not last long and were "fired." This arduous but stimulating policy accounted for the excellent preparation that my brother at Harvard found in his classmates from Exeter.

I had a lot to learn, not merely academically but in human relations. Emerging suddenly from the poorly taught and rather scatterbrained schools of my father's pastorates, I had to adapt myself to a new and lively community, and try to make my way among two hundred and fifty lads, almost every one older and more sophisticated than myself, to learn new games, new manners in some respects, and fit into an old-fashioned and thoroughly New England atmosphere.

Every day was a fresh education for me. Sometimes I was puzzled and perplexed, but there was never anything for discouragement in a community singularly tolerant, good-natured, and free from hazing. Also, greatly to my relief, I found before long that if I had sense enough to organize my work properly, I could keep up with the rest of the class and beat out the lazy ones. My father's former coaching of me in elementary Latin proved a help. We had nine hour-recitations a week in Latin, so it is easy to see what a backbone the training in that language gave us. And as our chief guide we had the best teacher that I have ever sat under anywhere, George Lyman Kittredge, who later at Harvard became the erudite, brilliant, and distinguished teacher of Shakespeare and Early English.

MY FIRST YEAR AT PREP SCHOOL

My mother had always been a great person at saving letters and various family memorabilia. And only a few years ago, my sister, shortly before she died, turned over to me a batch of my early letters home from Exeter that my mother had kept. They are homely and intimate, and probably to me after a lapse of almost sixty years they seem more humorous than they will to my children. My mother had apparently been much concerned as to what sort of boarding-school fare I should have, my father as to my religious surroundings. So in my letters I seemed to go out of my way to cover thoroughly both these points. At any rate I think I will insert a few of the letters in part or in whole, beginning with the first one written about ten days after my father had left a rather homesick boy, absent for the first time from the parental roof.

30 Gorham Hall
Exeter, N. H.
Sept. 24, '84

Dear Papa,

I received yours and Mamma's letter yesterday morning and it being a half holiday and rainy I thought I would answer it.

We have bath-rooms here but as you have to pay .50

every time you take a bath in them I do not patronize them. I went to church and S. S. Sunday. I did not like the teacher very much. Base-ball is not played here in the fall. They play foot-ball. A fellow got his leg broke last year here playing foot-ball. I went to prayer-meeting last night. They sung a song to the tune of "All ye fellers that have peanuts and give your neighbor none etc." The minister said that just ten minutes before his eldest son (15 years of age) was run over and killed by the cars he (his son) climbed up a tree and got a little Irish girl her hat which some mean boys threw up there. It was his last act before he was killed. They have a prayer-meeting Sunday night instead of preaching. The minister called on me. He said you wrote to him too.

He said he would like me to attend Class meeting Thursday night but I know I cannot spare but one week day night (Tuesday night) and not miss my lessons the next day. I have not found any trouble in getting my lessons so far but if I had not studied Latin for a year before I could not have kept up with the class. The catalogue says they begin Latin but unless a fellow has studied it before he would have to study all the time and take no exercise to keep from being dropped unless he was an unusually smart fellow. A good many of the boys have been through 1 or 2 books of Cæsar so they can stand at the head of the class with ease. Not having learned to pronounce Latin to Miss Cooper like they do here it

MY FIRST YEAR AT PREP SCHOOL

bothers me a good deal to get it straight. All the teachers are very pleasant. In our Latin book we have taken 60 pages in two weeks. They rush a fellow right through. There is a student here way from Minn. who is very sick. I will close now as it is getting dark. Give my love to Mamma and take some for yourself.

Your aff. son.

P. S. Our class has elected a president by the name of Hamm and they want to adopt a class motto in Greek or Latin. Will you please send me one and the English of it.

All my life I had been used to nothing more spacious than a tin bathtub, so the overexpensive bath facilities did not bother me at all. I might add that, while we had regular chapel exercises in the academy each morning at 7:45, for Sunday morning service each student went to the town church that he or his parents chose.

30 Gorham Hall
Exeter, N. H.
Sept. 28

Dear Mamma,

I received Papa's letter and the papers yesterday. I am well now, but I had three or four severe stomach-aches a while ago, caused by eating a few beans at Abbot two

or three times. I have given up eating beans. Their beans are not baked, they are boiled. We have not had roast-beef nor eggs once since I have been here at Abbot. My lamp only works half-way well. I think it needs a wider wick. They have not put a ward-robe in my room, but the clerk put up a lot of hooks for me to hang my clothes on. I like Rev. Mr. Adams very well except that his preaching is not as edifying as I have been used to hearing. I meant that he called on me at Gorham Hall. Instead of coming up to my room he sent word up just as I was in the midst of a lesson for me to come down stairs to see somebody so I trapeded down stairs and found him in the office where he did all his talking. He seemed awfully cracked on a Conference Seminary for both sexes a few miles from here. Do you want me to send the Y. C. and St. Nich. home after I read them. We have the Metric system of weights and measures which I have never studied but I can keep up with the class. I thank Papa very much for the motto's. I like them both. I feel the need of a clock very much. I wish Hammond would hurry up and send me one.

I subscribed for the "Exonian" the other day, you do not have to pay till the end of the year and you can hardly do without it. Shall I send it home after I have read it? Some fellow is around with a subscription all the time. I have not subscribed but for two things .25

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for a reading room in Gorham Hall and .25 for a "prep" football. I use both. The Exeter-Andover game of football is to be played the 15th of Nov. at Andover. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the fellows are going down as it is only a few miles from here. I have had to get a Higginson's Hist. U. S. and "American Prose" to study out of at School. Love to all.

Your loving son.

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30 Gorham Hall

Exeter, N. H.

Oct. 5

Dear Papa,

I received your two letters in the past week. A few days ago it was very cool but for the past few days it has been very sultry again. It is cooler to-day. The boy who was so sick is better; he had a fever.

They have but very few Sunday school books and they are not interesting so I did not get any. I do not have my stomach-ache any more. I think it is because I have stopped eating beans. We have very poor meals on Sunday.

There is a very nice fellow from Dover in my class who has a court and he said he would like to have me play tennis with him and I could take the court when he was away. I like my racquet very much indeed and I am ever so much obliged for it and the clock too. Hammond sent

me a picture of Samson like the one we have in the sitting room and I tacked it up in my room. It improves the appearance of the room very much. Mr. Childs told me today he would expect ten dollars. Please be sure and get it here by Wednesday noon as he will not receive the payments after that time. Smith the fellow who took us around when we came here played me a game of tennis yesterday afternoon. He has played for about a year but I beat him. He thought I played remarkably well for so short a time.

Fifteen students attend the Methodist Church. No, I never study my lessons on Sunday. A great many of the boys do. The clerk here has not sent in my bill for the room and washing yet. I can think of nothing more to say now.

You must be very lonely now every-body is away. I am lonely now and then myself but there is lots of ways to have fun here that you dont have. Give my love to Mamma in your next letter to her.

Your loving son.

My mother was apparently away on a brief visit. As to studying on Sunday, I had always been reared in the idea that it was not a sin, but was a secular duty that should be performed on a weekday. In my case my non-Sunday practice worked well, for I got my Monday

MY FIRST YEAR AT PREP SCHOOL

lessons behind my back on Saturday night and was left free to read some novel or whatever on Sunday. The "very nice fellow from Dover" was none other than Jeremiah Smith, Jr., one of the greatest characters that Exeter ever produced, distinguished at the bar and in public service, long a trustee of Phillips Exeter, the man who chose Lewis Perry as principal in 1914 and was always his loyal backer and friend. Jerry was my counsel at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and thereafter accompanied me in the twenties on various financial missions, twice to the Far East, once to Mexico, several times to Europe. No man, woman, or child could know Jerry without admiring and loving him.

30 Gorham Hall
Exeter, N. H.

Oct. 12

Dear Papa,

I received your two letters last week. I am not out of postage stamps yet. I have not got a wider wick for my lamp yet. The one I have will do well enough till I use it up. They have singing by a choir in the morning exercises in the Academy. They have to practice quite a good deal. I do not think I will join till next year.

Mr. Adams' text this morning was in Genesis 2nd chap. 2nd verse. I attended a meeting of the "Christian Fraternity" of the students tonight in one of the rooms of the Academy. They meet every Sunday night from 6½ to 7 P.M. They sing and pray and speak. That is a great note I should say about Eleda Beers. I used to see her out walking a great deal with that fellow. I will not need any more money for a good while now except my bill for my room and washing falls due on the 20th of this month. I have kept a strict account of my washing.

My old shoes are getting awfully short for me at the toes I cant wear them much longer. The three older classes here have issued a mandate that after snow falls we "Preps" must take off our hats when we meet them. If we do not they will roll us in the snow. They have organized a Blaine and Logan Club here, among the students. They have military drill and uniforms and torches. They are going to go to Portsmouth and Dover to parade. The proffessors are very much interested in it. The oleomargarine they have at Abbot Hall is strong. I have given up eating it. We have gone through all the conjugations and declensions in Latin. I cannot think of anything more to say now. Love to all if Mamma is home.

Your aff. son.

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MY FIRST YEAR AT PREP SCHOOL

30 Gorham Hall

Exeter, N. H.

Oct. 19

Dear Mamma,—

I suppose you are home again by this time. It has been very cold here lately. I had to get out my overcoat a day or two ago but I have not worn it but once. My everyday gray pants have worn a little hole through on the seat. Shall I try to mend them? We are to have an examination in Arithmetic tomorrow morning. I have to study a great deal harder on my Arithmetic lesson than you would suppose. Two hours every day. A football eleven selected from the Boston Latin School and the English High School from Boston played our team yesterday afternoon and was beaten 52 to 0 which was a splendid victory for us. I saw the game. They cheered a good deal. The school cheer is "E-x-e-t-e-r P-E-A. Ra-ra-ra" three times repeated. It sounds splendidly when all the students shout it with all their might.

The "Prep" class have adopted a class motto, a class cheer and class colors. The president appointed himself and two others as the committee on class motto and then ignored every motto but his own which he made the class motto. It is "Laborando perficies" which means "work tells." The class do not like the motto much. The class colors are to be a red ribbon with a black border and the cheer is "P-E-A ra-ra-ra '88."

The text this morning was in 2 Timothy 2 chapter and I could not hear the verse. It was about the "snares" anyway.

I am very much obliged to Papa for the St. Nicholas for the next year.

Dr. Scott the principal of the Academy is the most unpopular teacher in Latin with the "Preps" they have.

He gives very long lessons. He does not seem to realize the fact that most of them are beginners in Latin.

There is but one scholarship given in the "Prep" class the first year. It is sixty dollars. Of course it is very improbable that I could get it but I shall try for it.

There are more given the second year. There is nothing specially going on now so good bye.

Your loving son.

Luckily I did get a scholarship, but the question of my expenses continued to bother me, for my elder brother and sister were still at college and preparatory school, and my father's yearly salary was only \$1,200, really only \$1,080 after he had deducted his tithe for the Lord.

MY FIRST YEAR AT PREP SCHOOL

30 Gorham Hall

Exeter, N. H.

Oct. 26

Dear Papa,

I gave the check to the clerk and saw him put it down to my credit in his book. I worked out all of the examples in Arithmetic but did not get but eight of nine right. They were not so very hard. He has not given us the per cent which we passed yet. I know that I passed anyway. Just a few flakes of snow fell last week. I would not have noticed it if I had not been out doors at the time.

We recite to Dr. Scott three times a week. We recite mostly translations to him while to Profs. Cilley and Kittredge we recite the forms of the verbs and nouns. The minister's text this morning was Phillipians 3 c. 13 v. He was a different one. Just sixty days from now to Christmas Day.

The food at Abbot is just about the same as ever. I will send Mamma a bill of fare in a few days. We have enough cake such as it is. My room is plenty warm. I have it cool at night. I do not need my mittens yet.

Please explain the Metric System to Mamma. It would take up too much room here and she wants to know. I took two of my napkins over to Abbot Hall when I went there and I use those two. I saw a football game here

yesterday between Tufts College and our team. We beat them 52 to 0.

Give my love to Mamma.

Your loving son.

Schoolboys naturally and invariably grouse a bit about the food, but certainly my time at Exeter was long before the days of modern cooking plants, housekeepers, and hygienic food experts.

30 Gorham Hall

Exeter, N. H.

Nov. 2

Dear Father,—

Your letter came early in the week and the paper yesterday.

Have you a Classical Dictionary that you are not using? Please send it if you have as I need to refer to one very often and it is a good deal of trouble to go to the reference library every time.

The minister's text this morning was "Solomon's Dedicatory Prayer" 1 Kings 8th Chap. The minister reads all of his sermons and has them divided off into 1stlys and 2ndlys etc.

It rained Thursday morning and I took a bad cold which settled on my bowels and I had a terrible pain

M Y F I R S T Y E A R A T P R E P S C H O O L

there all the afternoon and night. I was a little better the next morning and I am all right now. I did not miss a single recitation except that I got excused from reciting at one recitation.

There has been one fellow dropped from the "Prep" class already. There will be more dropped in a few days. I got ninety per cent in the Arithmetic examination. The teacher said that in the next examination those who again got below fifty per cent would be dropped. Some got zero. We are to have a holiday Tuesday, election day.

There is going to be a harvest supper in the Methodist church Wednesday night.

There was a splendid game of football here yesterday between a picked eleven from Boston and our team in which our team beat, 22 to 0.

The great game of the season will be with Andover Academy two weeks from yesterday at Andover. About two hundred of the scholars are going. They have a special train. The school go in a body. It costs \$1 round trip. I do not expect to go. Three of the best men on the football team go to the Methodist Church.

I was very sorry to hear of Uncle Ed's sickness. I do hope he will get well. Give my love to all.

Your loving son.

P. S. Inclosed find list of things we had to eat for the past week.

As a matter of fact my father sent me the extra dollar and I did go to the Andover game. Perhaps it was my stroke of good fortune that there were three Methodists on the football eleven! As I read these two or three allusions of mine to the Exeter-Andover game which bulked large in my mind, I have an uncomfortable feeling that I was not wholly without guile in the way I put the matter. Anyway, I determined to get a job to make up that dollar, which was so hard come by in the parsonage income. So I spoke to one of the teachers in whose classes I had done creditable enough work. He knew all about his neighbors in town and the next week he turned up a job for me to split kindling wood for two aging spinsters on Grove Street at fifteen cents an hour.

This was a chore that I was familiar with, so before long I had recouped the family exchequer a bit, and the vigorous exercise was good for me. It is true that since those days I have sometimes earned more than fifteen cents an hour, but never anything that gave me as great dividends in satisfaction as that kindling-wood stipend.

MY FIRST YEAR AT PREP SCHOOL

30 Gorham Hall

Exeter, N. H.

Nov. 6

Dear Father,—

☞ I received your check a few days ago and paid it to-day. I received a letter and box with the mittens in Tuesday from Mamma. Tell Mamma that my gray everyday trousers have such a hole in the seat that they cannot be mended with darning. They will have to have a patch and I do not feel capable of that.

Our afternoon recitation is changed so as to begin at 5 P.M. so that we do not get out till 6 P.M. Everybody is greatly excited here about the election. We cannot get any definite returns about N. Y. State. Love to Mamma and all the friends in New York and vicinity.

Your loving son.

This letter, indicating the rapidly growing crisis as to the seat of my trousers, seems to close the series for the autumn term. Perhaps my mother never saved my melancholy letter about the great Exeter-Andover game played at Andover. Our eleven had been winning all the season. We had given the Harvard Freshmen a sound trouncing and were clearly the favorite for the Andover game. Perhaps our boys were a bit overconfident, but in

the gathering dusk the score stood 11 to 8 for Andover and only one minute left to play. Exeter had the ball and we were lined up about thirty yards in front of Andover's goal. The only possible chance of a win was a field goal, which counted five points. Our hearts were in our throats and we were hoarse from cheering. Center rush snapped the ball, the quarter passed it to Vic Harding, one of our halves. He paused for a moment, seemed to drop the ball to the ground and gave it a mighty boot. It sailed off squarely between the Andover goal posts. All Exeter gave a great shout and bedlam broke loose as the referee waved his hand to signify a goal had been kicked. And the game was over.

But what was this? We saw Harding walk over to the referee and shake his head "no." What else could he mean? Of course it was a goal. The referee said so. "No," said Harding gloomily, "the ball never touched the ground. It was only a low kicked punt." The referee had apparently not been quite used to such chivalry from a schoolboy. But he of course accepted Harding's word and the game was Andover's. We had lost, but Vic Harding's action has resounded down the generations of Exeter schoolboys far more loudly than any victory could

MY FIRST YEAR AT PREP SCHOOL

have done. The story is still told with pride at many an Exeter alumni dinner today.

The long Christmas holidays were coming on apace and we were all eager with the excitement of returning home. The day before we were dismissed several solemn members of the board of trustees visited the school and conducted what were known as the trustees' oral examinations. A trustee would wander into the Latin class and at random would pick out some question in parsing or translation and spring it on the hapless youth on whom his eye happened to alight. But fresh from our studies we seemed to know about as much Latin as the trustee and so after the first examination the rest did not seem formidable. But as a whole the trustees were an impressive lot of men. Edward Everett Hale was one of them and he conducted the final chapel exercises. How could even the remotest thought ever cross my mind then that as a grown-up man I should become a member of the board of trustees and even its president?

When I got back to the parsonage a few days before Christmas my welcome was a great heart-warming for me. The family was also surprised, for despite my

MY BOYHOOD IN A PARSONAGE

mother's fear for my adequate nourishment, I had grown almost two inches, my shoes had to be discarded, and all my coat sleeves and trousers were outgrown. The bracing New England atmosphere on a boy thrown on his own resources had had its excellent results. In fact the Exeter policy of making no attempt to keep close tab on the individual life of each student has frequently been criticized. We were free to ask the teachers questions, but we had no "advisers" and every student was on his own. If he failed to qualify in study or conduct, out he went. Exeter was not a school for a mamma's boy. He had to take the bitter with the sweet and largely work out his own salvation.

Exeter has almost three times as many students now as in my day and almost fifteen times as many teachers, so that, with classes much smaller, each student naturally receives more individual attention. But the spirit of self-reliance and self-help is as strong as ever and the number of all-round leaders in the community turned out under the great principalship of Dr. Lewis Perry in the last thirty years is probably as great as in the days a century ago when scores of Americans of later distinction got their training there.

* * *

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The Christmas holidays, with coasting, skating on the Hudson and, even better, on the Saugerties Creek, and some mild parties were gone in a moment, and there I was saying good-by again and starting out on my own rather lonely way back to Exeter. My first winter term was to prove a rather adventurous period for a young boy. The letters home begin:

Exeter, N. H.

Jan. 11, '85

Dear Mother,—

I got here all right Wednesday night about 6 o'clock. It was awfully long and tedious, stopping at every little way station and the scenery was uninteresting as I had seen it all before.

Two fellows from Exeter whom I knew quite well got on the train at Worcester. One of them sat with me on the train and we both took the same hack across to the Boston & Maine depot. I met Hammond in the Boston & Albany depot.

He looked well. He gave me a gay banner to hang in my room. He also gave me two colored collars to correspond with those colored shirts which I have not yet worn. I staid to supper at Lucy's in Albany and saw the two Alexander young ladies. I thought that they were kind of silly.

MY BOYHOOD IN A PARSONAGE

I suppose you got my postal saying about the board being due next Wednesday, \$10. I am nearly an inch taller than Cousin David. I went skating yesterday afternoon on the Fresh River. There was a large crowd there. It was very good skating. Dr. Scott advised a fellow who came a little late last term to study all he could on Sunday to catch up.

The minister's text this morning was Isa. 54 c. 13 v. He was as dull as usual. He reads all his sermons off word for word you know. I think I am as homesick if not a little homesicker than I was last term. *Don't tell anybody.* It is awfully dull here. I did not know what a good time I was having till I came away from home. My cough is about the same. I don't cough quite as often. Give much love to Papa from me.

Your loving son.

* * *

Exeter, N. H.

Jan. 14

Dear Papa—

I got Mamma's letter and the draft this (Wednesday) morning and paid it to Child's just now. Tell Mamma not to worry about my cough. It is a great deal better. A very strange thing happened to me last night while I was in bed. Some kind of an animal bit my lip as I was sleeping. I think it was a rat or a weasel. Of course it hurt because the thing bit hard and woke me up. It bled a good

M Y F I R S T Y E A R A T P R E P S C H O O L

deal last night and this morning my lip was considerably swollen. I went to the doctor with it this morning and he said that he guessed it would be all right in a day or two. He put some court plaster on and charged .50. I think Gorham Hall ought to pay the bill for allowing such a thing to be in the house. Don't let Mamma worry about it because it is such a little thing. George Haynes [the manager of Gorham Hall] is going to stop the hole where the thing got in.

With much love to Mamma and yourself.

Your son.

* * *

Exeter, N. H.

Jan. 16

Dear Papa,

My lip is a great deal better today, the swelling has gone down a good deal. It was a rat. There is no danger of being hurt by any more as they have stopped the hole with a piece of tin, where he got in and have caught all the rats in the house. There is no danger of my being poisoned the Doctor says. It is snowing quite hard to-day.

Love to Mamma and yourself. I am all right. Don't worry.

Your son.

* * *

MY BOYHOOD IN A PARSONAGE

Exeter, N. H.

Jan. 18

Dear Mamma,—

Your letter and telegraph came yesterday. I will tell you about the rat story now. Ahem! Tuesday night I went to bed about 9:30, and went right to sleep and did not wake up till 12 o'clock when I woke up suddenly with the feeling that somebody was trying a pair of pincers on my lips. I got right up and lit the lamp after quite a little bother to find some matches. When I looked at myself in the glass I was kind of scared. I looked so. My lip had been bleeding all this time and my face and hands and night-shirt were covered with gore, besides my lip being swelled to about twice its ordinary size. It began to pain me then and I did not get much more sleep that night. I did not wake anybody that night. I told George Haynes about it the next morning. He advised me to go to a doctor because rat's bites are sometimes poison. So I went. You could see the marks of the teeth of the animal on both my upper and under lip. The doctor said he thought it would be all right in a few days and it is all right now nearly. The swelling has gone down entirely. Everybody thought it was the strangest thing they had ever heard of and I think so myself. Somebody sent it right off to the Boston Daily Journal. I sent you the paper. Of course it is exaggerated some and the name spelt wrong, as usual. Haynes has stopped the hole up with a piece of tin. He

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set a trap up here and caught one big rat besides killing seven more with "Rough on Rats." It was not a pleasant experience, to wake up in the middle of the night, find yourself covered with blood.

We commenced "Viri Romae" yesterday. In the middle of a recitation the other day, Dr. Scott got up and said if any of us got tired of sitting still he would just as leave we would get up and walk around the room. He himself set the example by walking around. There is a fellow here, about twenty years old, I should say, from Missouri. The other day, she, his mother, wrote to Dr. Scott asking if anything had happened to her boy. She had not heard from him in *two months*. He said she had been visiting around and he did not know where to direct to. The minister's text this morning was 2 Thes. 1 c. 10v. He was a different man today. I gave a couple of your cookies to a fellow who was in my room the other day. He desired me to send his compliments to you for them. I left my overcoat hanging in the hall at Abbot while I was getting supper the other night and when I came back I found quite a tear in the velvet collar. Shall I mend it myself, or get the tailor to? I have written quite a long letter and I am tired. I wish I was home with you and Papa to-night. Give very much love to Papa from me and I send very much to you.

Your loving son.

• • •

Exeter, N. H.

Jan. 25

Dear Papa,—

I received both yours and Mamma's letters during the week. My lip is all right now, no swelling or anything. A few nights ago when a fellow named Pattee awoke in the morning he found his shoes gnawed considerably by rats or mice and this morning another fellow named Trafford woke up and found top of one of his shoes completely eaten off. The shoe was spoiled. He was very thankful they did not take him instead of the shoe. They cannot get in my room any more though. The minister's text this morning was John 3 chap. 14 & 15 verses. We have a funny Sunday School teacher, as soon as he comes to the class he will ask them some question they don't care anything about and has no reference to the lesson. "What was the name of David's great great grandfather?" or "What was Paul's last name?" Of course nobody knows and he always winds up with: "Of course I don't know myself, but I thought maybe some of you did." We had an examination in Arithmetic Thursday. It was very hard, a great deal harder than we have had yet. They say one-half of the class will not pass over 40%. We have not yet learned how much we have passed yet. I am going to keep this letter open till after the arithmetic session to-morrow morning, to see if they tell us then. I went

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skating Wednesday afternoon, I skated over 10 miles. Up to the rapids and back five miles each way. It was a splendid day for skating. I had a Bill of Fare of the past week to send to you but I lost it. I will send one next week. Mrs. Haynes mended my overcoat very neatly herself, and did not charge anything either. There is not much going on here now so there is not much to write. With the utmost love to Mamma and yourself.

Your boy.

I can see from this distance in point of time that my mother regarded my version of the rat affair as in the nature of an understatement. That boy Trafford, by the way, whose shoes the rats found so palatable, later became president and chief marshal of his class at Harvard, one of the greatest football guards that Harvard ever had, and afterwards an eminent member of the New York bar.

Exeter, N. H.

Jan. 30

Dear Mamma,—

I got your letter and postal and suspenders and neckties. The suspenders work very well but I am sorry to say that the neckties do not fit. They are too wide. I liked the

color of the red one very much. If you could make one for me the size of the Sunday one I would like it very much. My cough seemed to be getting better without the medicine so I did not take it as I do not like to swig down medicine when I don't need it, but I took more cold in the recitation room Wednesday morning which was very cold. It seemed to aggravate my cough and make it worse besides giving me a cold in the head so I fixed the medicine and am taking it now. I also bought some cough drops which did my throat some good. I don't think it is on my lungs because once in a while I have a rumbling noise about there when I breathe. The board bill for February is due next Wednesday, \$13 instead of \$10. My mark in Arithmetic was 90%. Only one got higher, 96%. Many got very low, 5, 10 and 15%. With the best love to you and Papa,

Your son.

Less than three weeks after my encounter with the rat, I became very hot and uncomfortable and lost my appetite completely. Half a dozen boys piled into my little room to express sympathy and ask what they could do. So I finally suggested that one of them call in the Exeter doctor—Perry, his name was, by no means a young man and with plenty of experience. He came in a

half hour and began looking me over. I said to him rather apologetically: "Doctor, my chest seems awful red and itchy."

He opened my nightshirt, gave me one look, and said surprisedly: "Why, boy, you've got scarlet fever." There was a quick scattering of the boys, for to them as to me, in those days scarlet fever was a thing not to be sneezed at. "I'll be back soon," said the good old doctor, "we'll have you out of here in no time."

I vaguely wondered how and where. There was no hospital at Exeter and it was thirty-five years before the days when the academy had its own modern infirmary, a contagious pavilion, and a resident doctor and nurse. But within the hour the doctor came back and, wonder of wonders! there came with him Professor Wentworth—the great Professor Wentworth. Then he showed he had a heart as tender as his mind was keen.

"We are taking you up to Mrs. Graves's on Grove Street. She's a natural-born nurse and she and the doctor will get you well before you know it," said he.

Then before you could say knife he wrapped me snugly in the blankets, gathered me up in his strong arms, and carried me down the three long flights to the

street. An old hack on runners (the February snow was heavy and crisp) was waiting, heated with an oil stove, and we were off. I leaned back languidly and tried to tell my thanks and add some word about not letting my father and mother worry.

"I'll take care of that," said Mr. Wentworth, and then he gave me infinite comfort by adding: "Your father and I are good friends. We got well acquainted when he came with you last September. He knows we'll look after you."

The rest is more or less of a haze. The weeks sped by and hardly more than a fortnight of the winter term was left when the doctor pronounced me well enough to go home. I wanted to go back to my classes, but they said no, I must take that time to get my strength back. No, I shouldn't be dropped. They would give me for the winter term the same marks that I had gained for the autumn term.



Spring term at Exeter is the brightest period of the whole year and I am not sure but of life itself. My troubles had all sloughed off with my old skin. The lovely elms in the Yard and along the streets of beautiful

old Exeter and 'the countryside were bursting into bloom. My classmates, many of whom I had hardly known, warmed my heart, the way they flocked around to give me welcome. I did not seem to have missed anything irreparable in my classes. We were further along in Cæsar's *Commentaries* and in Algebra. That was about all and I fell readily enough into line.

But more than all else in that first spring term at Exeter, with its outdoor activities in the warming sunshine, there was an exhilaration in the air, a knowledge that the hard grind of the year was behind us. There were dawning hopes of athletic victories over Andover, and after all that, the long summer holiday stretching out until September and a happy return to school.

The end of the term came only too quickly. With all the strangeness worn off, with my early friendships consolidated, I could look forward to the three last years of school with eagerness and confidence. Even in lesser matters I seemed to get a break. My father had said to me just before leaving home: "Tommy, if you really don't care for that Methodist minister's preaching you may go to some other church." So as the Baptist Church, close by the Yard, was looking for a fourth to sing in its

Sunday morning quartet, I happened to qualify and was taken in. There was a bit of poetic justice in that. If I had failed to make second base on my class baseball nine, at least I could make second bass on the Baptist church choir.

Then, too, there was that debate in the Golden Branch Literary Society on women's suffrage. I was cast to oppose. Even after all these years I recall my initial, ringing declaration: "It is a well-known fact that women cannot think nor feel as deeply or as strongly as men." This was greeted with rounds of applause. From the vantage point of a man of the world I looked back over my fourteen years of youth, and as a result of my rich experiences, I declared that women had been tried and had been found wanting. Needless to say, our side won the debate.

Over all these sixty years I look back with gladness and gratitude to my first year at Exeter. It was that first year, with its vigorous, thoroughgoing teachers, and with the intense application which they inspired, that taught me how to use my mind, such as it was, and how to work. That year laid the foundation for all my subsequent course at preparatory school and at college. It had taught me not to be a grind, but to order my tasks with economy

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and dispatch. I have often said that if it had been permitted me to attend only Exeter or Harvard, I should have chosen Exeter every time. And that is said in no derogation of college, which so broadened my outlook, gave me such an unconscious training in tolerance, such an introduction to life, to letters, and to loyal friendship. As to our whole course at Exeter my schoolmates and I, whether we fully realized it then or not, had that sense of walking in new paths, of dawning hopes, and untried possibilities, a "confidence," as Professor Gilbert Murray, the great Greek scholar, puts it, "that all things can be won if only we try hard enough. It is that youth," Professor Murray declares, "which is half the secret of the Greek spirit."

Three more crowded years at Exeter were ahead of me. As to them all, I shall mention only an episode of the closing days in my senior year. I had been chosen an editor of the *Pean*. That was the school annual, containing all the athletic and debating statistics, with grinds on ourselves, on our fellow students, and on the other school periodicals. The *Pean* usually contained also some student sketches, attempting to depict various drolleries of school life.

I heard of a chap hailing from Indianapolis in a class below me, who had not been long in school but who, his friends said, could sketch a bit. I looked him up and invited him to contribute some sketches for the *Pean*. With due modesty he accepted the invitation from the mighty senior board of the *Pean*. Then he proceeded to turn in some jolly sketches, with rather striking captions and amusing whimsies. We accepted them very kindly. They took awfully well with all the editors; and as we went to press one of us remarked sagely: "We took on that Booth Tarkington chap for his drawings. But there's no knowing—if he were to apply himself, some day he might also learn to write."

If youth has its troubles, the chief of them is that youth cannot last. After Exeter, there was stretching before me a vividly exciting prospect—four wonderful years at Harvard College. Should I be able to make my way? And then all the long span of life still ahead. What was I to become? What sort of work should I do? Could I tip the scales toward success rather than failure? Looking ahead was like embarking on new seas of adventure. Wherever they bore me, I knew well enough, with the end of Exeter, the carefree days of school life were over

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and I must buckle down to real responsibilities and prepare to make my own way in the world.

My parsonage days still continued in holiday times during my remaining years at school and college. But now vacations were crowded with more mature pastimes in a widening circle of friends. I had shot up, even in that first year at Exeter, from boyhood to youth. At the time nothing seemed to have changed. But now we three children were facing a larger world. The early years of constant and intimate family companionship were yielding a little to the expanding times. The sacrifices borne cheerfully together were more in the past than in the present. In the words of St. Paul, we had spoken, we had understood, we had thought as children. Now we had put away childish things. The old days were becoming a lovely memory, something to cling to and laugh over all our lives. But my boyhood in a parsonage was over.

~~CHAPTER III~~

Epilogue

FOUR YEARS AT HARVARD

HARVARD COLLEGE IN MY TIME WAS THE AGE OF THE giants. First of all came the president, Charles William Eliot. He was the man who changed Harvard from a small, red-brick, colonial institution, primarily Bostonese and largely New England, to a great university. He too, like President Conant of today, was at the start a student and highly successful teacher of chemistry. Thrust at the age of thirty-five into the presidency, Eliot lost no time in starting to develop into maturity Harvard's graduate and professional schools; meanwhile giving to the college itself (which must always be Harvard's prime interest) a tremendous shaking up, with his sweeping introduction of the elective system. Perhaps succeeding decades proved that Eliot went a bit too far, but the new system gave at any rate immense range and interest to the academic life of the average student.

When I came from Phillips Exeter to Cambridge in September, 1888, Mr. Eliot was a staid figure of great

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dignity, seen moving through the Yard to University Hall, the seat of administration. He had little direct contact with the students, and gradually over the years gained a repute for being aloof and cold. My first meeting with him, however, showed a far different side.

My roommate had, for what seemed a technical violation of existing regulations, been disciplined by being "rusticated" for six weeks at Lexington, a few miles from Cambridge. On the Sunday afternoon before he was to begin his sentence, he and I heard heavy footsteps coming up to our third-floor quarters in Thayer Hall. Then a double knock on the door. "Come in," I said mildly. No response except again the double rap. "Come in, dammit," I yelled. The door opened and in stalked President Eliot, looking about eight feet tall. I yanked my feet off the top of my desk, leapt up and bowed respectfully.

"I came," said Mr. Eliot, "to speak with Hunt"—my roommate who was standing gloomily in front of the fireplace. I vanished into the bedroom, but the door did not shut tightly. I could hear Mr. Eliot's deep, bell-like tones.

"Hunt," he said, "your father and I were classmates

and friends in college. I heard of your difficulty. I wanted to tell you not to be downhearted. That time will pass quickly. You will do much reading. Perhaps in the end you will, as a result, find your standing much improved." And then again in kindly tones he added: "A few weeks, and the slate will be wiped clean—nothing held against your record."

My roommate was immensely cheered by this extraordinary gesture of the president's visit. Downhearted as he was, it had been to him like "a great rock in a weary land." In later, post-graduate years I came into frequent contact with Mr. Eliot. He of course had no recollection of my first meeting with him. I had a vivid memory of it: there was nothing cold in the make-up of that great individual. As to my roommate, his later college and professional school career was a creditable one and he came to rank highly in the medical profession of our day.

When I became a Harvard freshman, who were some of the others that were sitting in the seats of the mighty? Well, there was Oliver Wendell Holmes, not of course the Supreme Court Justice of our day but his father, the only and original author of *The Autocrat of the Break-*

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fast Table and much besides. I never laid eyes upon him, but there he was in the annual catalogue, as large as life—"Professor of Anatomy Emeritus." And as counterpart to him there was James Russell Lowell. He had served as United States Minister to the Court of St. James's from 1880 to 1885, and had returned quietly to take up again his professorship in the French and Spanish languages.

Then he too retired, but was promptly elected to a seat on the Board of Harvard Overseers. In those days we knew of Mr. Lowell mostly as the author of pleasing verse—"The Vision of Sir Launfal" ("And what is so rare as a day in June?"). But his lines perhaps most quoted are those inscribed on the memorial on Boston Common to Robert Gould Shaw, who fell at the head of his colored troops in the assault on Fort Wagner in South Carolina in the Civil War:

Right in the van,
On the red rampart's slippery swell
With heart that beat a charge, he fell
Foeward, as fits a man;
But the high soul burns on to light men's feet
Where death for noble ends makes dying sweet . . .

I must not make this a catalogue. I suppose, too, that every college generation may claim that its was the period when the great oaks in intellect and teaching grew and flourished. But where ever, among American institutions, was there such a gathering of notable figures? John Fiske, who lectured as entertainingly on American history as he wrote it; W. W. Goodwin of Goodwin's *Greek Grammar*; and Joseph Henry Allen and James Bradstreet Greenough of Allen and Greenough's *Latin Grammar*. Certainly it was refreshing to hear these classical gentlemen lay out before us and expound their own wares.

In mathematics, and astronomy, there were the two outstanding Peirces—James Mills and Benjamin Osgood, far ahead of their day; in Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Early English, Francis James Child, perhaps the greatest scholar in that latter field that the world had ever seen; and George Lyman Kittredge, who had taught me Latin at Exeter, now only an instructor in English at Harvard, but destined to become by all odds the leading American expounder of Shakespeare in the early decades of the twentieth century.

How can I stop without mentioning Phillips Brooks,

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that great and eloquent man whose contact with us students was his membership in the Harvard Board of Preachers? Whenever he came out to speak to us, old Appleton Chapel was crowded to the doors with students. Dr. Brooks was a giant in stature. From such a massive presence the tremendous flow of his words was weighty with power and feeling. Certainly he moved the Harvard student body as no one else could do. As chief of that same Board of Preachers sat Dr. Andrew Preston Peabody, not a Phillips Brooks in imagination and sweep of power, but a saintly man with a certain radiance emanating from him. When he died they wrote upon his tomb in all truth, "For thirty years he walked among the professors and students of Harvard College and wist not that his face did shine."

Those are some of the great individuals that formed a part of the setting surrounding a freshman at Harvard in my time. I keep calling them giants, because they were that—either in intellect, imagination, personality, or attainment—or possessing as many of them did, all those qualities together. There were others, too, one or two hardly less in stature, whose figures come back and stir my memories of those sunlit days. A school or college

generation of even four years makes vast changes in the outlook of youth. At prep school the world had opened for me and given me an extraordinary stimulus, yet when I first trod the ways of that historic seat of learning on the Charles River, I felt a bit like the African hunter who, seeking a solitary elephant, comes suddenly upon a whole herd of these huge creatures browsing quietly, wisely, and majestically by the stream.

Before I leave this group I might mention the first lecture that almost the entire freshman class attended. That was Chemistry A, and the gloomy room in the old, granite building was crowded to the doors. The head of the department was Josiah Parsons Cooke, venerable and somewhat feeble, but an eminent figure in the world of chemistry. The lecture half over, Professor Cooke stood behind a table on which were various retorts, bottles, and other apparatus having to do with experimental work. "Now here, gentlemen," said the professor, looking exceedingly fragile, his hand trembling, "here I hold in either hand ingredients that if, by any unhappy chance should they come in contact, would blow into bits the whole building and all of us together."

A moment of silence and then a long-drawn sigh came

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from the uneasy freshmen. As we wended our way out after the lecture a couple of sophomores across the hall yelled to us: "Did old Cooke work on you his usual gag of blowing you up? Nothing but water in those retorts, I'll bet."

When I entered college I knew full well that the question of my expenses was bound to be a perplexing one; that I must find some way to meet a good part of them myself. But I early decided that the route of securing an annual scholarship was not for me. I had no mind to turn into even a mild grind. I was anxious, probably overanxious, to share actively in the extracurricular life of my fellows. So in the autumn of my first year I played some football on the freshman squad, partly for the exercise and also to get to know some of the leaders of the class whose initial popularity came frequently by way of their athletic prowess.

Soon, however, I made up my mind I would go out strong for an editorship of *The Crimson*, the students' daily newspaper. With the training I had had on the Exeter school papers, my way was not too difficult. I knew the sort of happenings that I should follow up and write about. After a few months I was lucky enough to

be elected as the first freshman editor. *The Crimson*, prudently run, was not an unprofitable enterprise, and at the end of each year the editors "divvied" up a few hundred dollars among ten or a dozen of us. Also, the practice was for one of the editors who could do with the money to come every night to the office about midnight to correct the final proofs and put the paper to bed. A few dollars a week was the reward for this, and the job was left in my hands for the next three years. The income, though small enough, helped on my term bills, and the work established in me an almost lifelong habit of being able to sit up late at work of some kind and yet turn in and fall at once into a dreamless slumber.

The amateur journalism of the college daily paper led naturally to other chances. The *Boston Advertiser*, an evening newspaper, asked me to be its Harvard correspondent at about five dollars a week. And I was in transports when a year or so later the *Boston Herald* bid me away with a regular stipend of fifty dollars a month. For me this was a bonanza. In one way or another I could relieve the family exchequer of two-thirds of my college expenses.

There was, too, plenty of variety in the job. Though

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the arrangement did not call for it, I made a point of frequently writing "Sunday Specials" for the *Herald*—athletic summaries, or other phases of Harvard life. These articles bore my initials, and before long I was being asked to contribute occasional pieces for the New York City press. The Boston *Herald* sent me to Springfield in November to cover the Harvard-Yale football match, and—what seemed almost a divine assignment—to spend a week in New London in late June for the preliminaries of the great Harvard-Yale races, and then to cover the freshman and final four-mile varsity contests with Yale. Certainly my heart with rapture thrilled when I could stand in the bow of the press boat following only a few rods behind the heaving, eight-oared crews while, as Virgil said of other oarsmen in the ancient world, "wakening lust of glory tugged at their throbbing hearts."

What with adequate attention to studies and these outside activities, I was too occupied to spend much time in a club. But I did sing in the chorus of the Hasty Pudding Club theatricals for two successive years. As a sophomore I had been active in the production of the Dickey (ΔΚΕ) Christmas theatricals; and according to

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one of the old programs that a classmate recently sent to me, I was cast as a leading character in a rollicking show entitled "The Lady or the Tiger." It was a bully crowd of classmates that rehearsed and played together, and those were jolly and carefree days.

The parsonage, when I went home, was just as much a haven of rest as ever, and as by that time my father had been transferred to a larger charge, my holidays had wider scope. We were still on the Hudson River and there was plenty of boating and tennis. That lively game had been imported from England less than two decades before and actually had only begun to attain its popularity in the country regions. I was always happy to get home to the parsonage, even though the complete simplicity of the boyhood days had gone a bit. Yet when my holidays were over I was keen as a briar to get back to the excitement and variety of college.

To me affairs seemed well in balance. It was only a couple of years after Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. The whole world was at peace. America was not a perfect community. We had our inequities, our slums, and our politics. But as for any thought of war, or foreign aggression, or even serious study of current

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foreign affairs—none of that came within our ken. Why should not the world go on this way forever?

In my last two years of college I derived much satisfaction from membership in the two "literary" societies, the Signet in our junior year, and O.K. in the senior. We met monthly, read to one another casual papers, bits of verse, or what not, followed by informal discussion and a modest spread to wind up the evening. Since my time the Signet has blossomed out in rather a luxurious clubhouse, whereas the O.K., although perhaps taking itself somewhat more seriously than the Signet, has disappeared completely from the scene.

Another connection that was of great stimulus to me was the *Harvard Monthly*, the senior student publication in letters which took itself rather seriously. I had been invited by the business editor to come along, attend the monthly evening editorial councils and eventually take over the business editorship. The latter role interested me little, and to poor Phil Abbot, the senior business editor, I proved I know a great deal. I felt capable enough of administering the business end—subscriptions, advertising, etc. But I declined all pleadings to keep a set of books. That I felt I could not

endure. Nor have I ever learned the art, hardly the theory.

My own patent method of bookkeeping, when I finally took charge, was charmingly simple. I had at either end of my mantel over the fireplace an empty strawberry-jam jar. To the jar on the right I consigned a slip denoting each item of revenue that we received, and into the left-hand jar I put a memorandum of every item of expenditure. At the end of each month, the contents of each jar were totaled up and the balance either way was set down and consigned to the credit or debit jar to make a fresh start. What could be easier or more meritorious than that? Poor Abbot's pleas that I should "strike" some curious creature called a "trial balance" left me polite, apologetic, but cold. Abbot, who had been trained from his earliest hours to the handling of figures, said that my slipshod methods were frightfully bad for my morale. Yet when I came into full charge we had a prosperous enough year. At any rate, I kept my jam-jar methods to myself and never attempted later to introduce or exploit them in the field of banking.

What stirred me most were the monthly meetings of the editorial council. We gathered at 8.00 P.M. in the

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room of the editor-in-chief and sat on the floor around his blazing open fire—seven or eight of us. After the plans for the next issue had been talked over and a *pro forma* table of contents arranged, prose and verse; then, based upon the articles under consideration, our chief would lead us into a general discussion that took us far afield. During the first few months I dared say hardly a word: I felt that I was sitting unworthily in a group of great, wise, and witty men.

They were, for college undergraduates, an outstanding and interesting lot. One was Norman Hapgood, long since dead, but thirty-five years ago, the brilliant editor of *Collier's Weekly*, widely quoted and one of President Wilson's confidential advisers. Two others were poets, Hugh McCulloch, a Southerner whose verses years ago before his early death had limited vogue. The other was William Vaughan Moody, a bit on the melancholy side, yet a poet of deep feeling and inspiration, in his own New England field well known and highly regarded for many years. Another editor was Robert Morss Lovett, our own class poet, for years a distinguished professor of English at the University of Chicago. Occasionally an outsider was brought in to stir us

up—a Bliss Carman or some other such shooting star that would startle or soothe us at will.

The discussion was physically sustained by large slabs of Baker's sweet chocolate (hardly the stimulant that would be favored in these days), provided from my credit jam jar, and we would continue for about two hours. What great questions did we not settle or at least clarify in those chocolate-inspired evenings? Nothing was too abstruse for us to tackle. "What is the nature of happiness?" Another magnificent topic that comes back to me was, "What is the meaning of existence?" Fifty years later, can any of my readers answer that? "What fate have the new sciences in store for us?" Well, of course that is simply the atomic question of 1945 *et seq.* "Do Americans possess virtue and reason in living?" I think I was a bit less dismayed about the state of the nation than the others, but we were all exceedingly doubtful. Can there be those among us that entertain doubts even to this day?

My senior year was moving along apace, and I could begin to look back over my previous three years. I had, I think, been tempted a little too much by the lure of the elective system. I was a little sorry that instead of

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concentrating, I had scattered my work in too many fields. For two years I had kept on with the classics—partly, I suppose, because that was the family tradition, my father having first been a teacher of Greek and Latin. Then, too, I had some sort of subconscious realization that, as Professor Gilbert Murray of Oxford has said so many times, inasmuch as we are direct descendants of the Hellenic and Roman civilizations of the Mediterranean, how can we know what and why we are, without some knowledge of Greece and Rome and without in part understanding the languages? I was sensible enough to include in my courses considerable English composition (which was helped by my constant newspaper writing); a course in international law—why, then, I don't remember, but twenty years later it began to come in handy; no mathematics—in fact, really no science at all—stupid of me, I guess.

Then there were three courses in philosophy, that department at Harvard being far outstanding among all the universities of the country. Philosophy seemed rather out of my line, for I was given to action rather than to meditation and speculation. It was the men—all three of them falling in my classification of giants—rather than

the subjects that attracted me—George Herbert Palmer, Josiah Royce, and William James. (George Santayana was just beginning as an instructor.) Professor Palmer taught us ethics in a most alluring manner. I had already known him through his perfectly corking translation of Homer's *Odyssey*. Royce taught us something of the history of philosophy. He was a provocative lecturer—you never knew which way he was going to turn, but whatever way it was, he was sure to open up new vistas for you.

The most alluring of the three was of course William James. He had a brilliant younger brother, Henry James, the eminent novelist who was just beginning to come into his own and whose novels in these days are having a renaissance. The repute of no one of my Harvard teachers has, I imagine, continued to live fifty years after so vigorously as has that of William James. After taking these courses, I might well have testified that of all my academic work at college, they at the time seemed most vital to me, most stimulating in opening up new fields of thought, although in later years I became far more interested in history and economic development.

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As I glance over these pages (which have of course been written purely from memory) I note I have not mentioned the Old Play Club. The English Club, long established and meeting regularly, had a good deal of interest for us, but I think I got more out of the Old Play Club. It was not really a club. It was only an evening gathering, in one another's rooms, of six or eight of us seniors, all close friends, to read a few old plays; each of us taking one of the characters. Most of the plays we read—not over half a dozen in all—were eighteenth century, but one or two went much further back.

I have been trying to remember who the members of the group were and what became of them. Only one afterwards became a dramatic critic or had anything to do with the theater. Another was literary and musical. He composed very passable verse for college days and wrote some fugues that ought to have seen the light of day. A newspaper correspondent in the Spanish War, he later became a publisher in a modest way, but after a few years of that life, he retired and placidly lived and died on the left bank of the Seine in Paris. Another member became of all things a stockbroker! Another a lawyer.

The most striking figure of all, a notable athlete in college days, an iconoclast in almost all fields of thought, bought himself years after graduation a sugar plantation on an island in the West Indies and reared a small family there. One of his exploits was that on a certain late November day long ago he became overwhelmed (so he explained to me later) with a nostalgia to eat Christmas dinner in Peking. Catching a banana steamer to New York, he crossed the Atlantic, made a dash for St. Petersburg (as it was then under the czars), and took the fortnight journey across the Steppes on the trans-Siberian railway. Arriving in Harbin, he hurried down through Manchuria and finally reached Peking on Christmas Eve. Next day he had two Christmas dinners, one Chinese and one European style, both in solitary state with a couple of quarts of warmish champagne. Sated and satisfied, he retired to a dreamless slumber and was awakened at noon on December 26 to take the train north, retracing step by step his long and lonely trek westward across Siberia, Russia, the Baltic, the Atlantic, and so home to mother and the children.

One good effect that the readings in the Old Play Club had on me was to lead me to spend more time in

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the college library. It was situated just in the rear of Thayer Hall where I roomed, and I could dash down there any time when I had a few minutes to spare. Old Gore, the library, was of the good, old-fashioned type not so cumbered up with card catalogues and regulations (quite necessary in these later days of specialized text and reference books), as to prevent a student from browsing about and dipping into all sorts of volumes that might attract him. Even if this irregular reading could be argued as a bit demoralizing, it was exciting, and I found it especially helpful in some study that I was just then undertaking on the Renaissance.

Unlike so many of my friends who had come from large cities, I had had the run of no art galleries at all. The result was that I got a great stirring up from the fine arts courses that I elected to take in my last college year. They were under the distinguished Charles Eliot Norton, a person of great erudition and an almost over-exquisite taste, but a master of his professorship, the history of art. One of the leaders of the Harvard faculty, he was the contemporary and friend of Carlyle, Burne-Jones, Matthew Arnold, and also John Ruskin, who in his earlier career was reputed to have come under Nor-

ton's influence and to have regarded him as his "master," a rather interesting reversal of the usual transatlantic influence. His English was perfect, his voice modulated and melancholy, and he seemed far removed from the workaday world of America in the nineties.

Very naturally, for Professor Norton Greece was the source of everything sublime in art. The Renaissance was the re-flowering of most that was worth while in the ancient world. Starting with Cimabue, he led us gently, methodically, and with vast entertainment through the Renaissance. It was four or five years later when I took my first trip abroad and had the leisure to spend long afternoons in the galleries of England and the Continent that I began to appreciate what Professor Norton had, in his quiet tones, brought into the lives of so many of his pupils like me, wholly untutored in the field of art.

June, 1892, came and I found myself after an exciting Class Day and Commencement saying good-by to Harvard. I could not linger on, because immediately after Commencement I was to begin work as a reporter on the old *Tribune* in New York City. I was leaving Harvard with regret, yet eager to find out what lay

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ahead. My four college years had been filled to the brim. I could see many mistakes that I had made, but I had managed to get along better than my fondest dreams had given me a right to hope. Probably my extracurricular activities had been too extensive and certainly my studying too discursive.

What I am saying sounds like an apology. It is, in a way. Yet all my memories of the four years were happy ones: there was everything to remember, nothing to forget. And I think, as I left the Yard behind me, there were two feelings uppermost in my mind. The one was how humbling an experience four years at college was—to begin to have realization of the vast stores of learning and thought that had been made available to us; the wonderful minds and men at whose feet, so to speak, we had sat. Back in the sixteenth century one Sir Edward Dyer wrote some lines that are often quoted, beginning:

My mind to me a Kingdom is,
Such present joys therein I find,
That it excels all other bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind.

In repeating these lines I do not mean to indicate that for each of my classmates and me the mind had become a wide realm of any great value. But our studies, our contacts with fine intellects among our teachers, our many activities, had brought home to us the fact that we could utilize our minds as we pleased, for good or ill. And the realization of that meant that college had on the whole been a wholesome preparation for life.

The second emotion that kept coming back to me was the sense of freedom that the atmosphere of Harvard and the years we had spent in it had brought home to us. In his inaugural address, delivered in 1869 when he was only thirty-five years old, President Eliot had said that "the winnowing breeze of freedom must blow through" all the chambers of the college. What he then declared must come true had indeed been fulfilled. No student of my day, I believe, could have spent those four years at Cambridge without being swept through and through with that great winnowing breeze of freedom which Mr. Eliot had invoked.

It all fitted in with Professor Royce's last lecture of the year to us when at the close he had put away philosophy and had given us his benediction in these

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words that I have never forgotten: "My dear young gentlemen, what I pray is that you may be granted the wisdom to comprehend and the courage to endure the business of life!"

Epilogue

JOURNALISM IN THE GAY NINETIES

THIS SKETCH ON EARLY EPISODES IN JOURNALISM DOES not properly come into my volume at all. For although at the time I was still living with my parents, my boyhood was in the past and college days had come. Yet because these early newspaper assignments have come back to me rather vividly, I add this chapter even though it may strike an alien note.

In the summer following my freshman year at Harvard, needing to earn some money, I said good-by to my parents and landed a job as a reporter on the Albany *Evening Journal*, taking the place of staff members on their vacations. I received fifteen dollars a week and as I got a hall bedroom, breakfast, and supper for five dollars a week and spent only two dollars and fifty cents more on luncheons and incidentals, I was able to save a tidy little sum. The city editor, because I was only temporary, assigned me to all the jobs that were pesky and ornery and prevented my establishing any good

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will. For instance, I had to write up a humorous account of a country bumpkin being shown through the capitol by one of the guards, ridiculing my guide, mimicking his speech, mannerisms, and so on, so that I never dared return to the capitol for a second visit.

Let me, however, for a moment digress to say that no assignment the *Evening Journal* gave me was quite so momentarily awkward as the one I got at the hands of the old New York *Tribune* where, on a warm letter from dear old Frank Bolles, the secretary of Harvard College and President Eliot's right hand, I started as reporter the Monday after my graduation from college. It was a hot summer and tramping the streets of New York was a humid business at best. And the season was marked by an Asiatic cholera scare. Cases had been discovered in the steerage of one or two French transatlantic liners, which were held up for days at quarantine, the presumably unexposed cabin passengers frantic at the delay. Finally one noon a local Associated Press report came to the *Tribune's* city desk that an authentic case of cholera had been discovered in a rooming house among the tenements on far West 10th Street.

"There you are!" said the city editor shoving the

flimsy slip into my hand, "you hike right up there, Lamont, and get a first-class story. Try to get into the sick man's room and have a look at him." "Yes, Mr. Bowers," I murmured rather miserably.

I started up on the old Ninth Avenue elevated and too late thought of stopping at a drugstore and trying to get soaked with disinfectants. I attempted to walk briskly west on Tenth Street but my feet seemed like lead. I did not like the assignment: I had no ambition to become an expert on tropical diseases and Asiatic cholera seemed a particularly nasty thing to write about. I didn't relish seeing the patient anyway. Finally I neared the spot.

A lot of people were surging about in front of one wretched tenement. Every window of the tenement was wide open, there were no screens and thousands of eager flies buzzed in and out of the sick-room, then settling down to pick on the passers-by or to crawl horribly in and out of the gently rotting peaches and plums on a fruit cart in front of the house. The Italian vendor and his customers seemed to take more scientific interest in Asiatic cholera than I could profess. But God be praised! the authorities had drawn a *cordon sanitaire*

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around the place—policemen holding the crowd back with a rope.

I was feeling better, but of course went up to the police lieutenant, explained I was the representative of the great metropolitan daily, the *New York Tribune*, that it was important that the public should have all the facts without sensation, etc., etc., and that I should be allowed to go in. "Not here, young man," said the officer. "You ask your boss to get a pass from the commissioner and mebbe it'll be O.K." But, I argued, time was pressing—we must get the story promptly. No go, however. So with a sense of duty fairly well done I proceeded back to the office. The city editor looked cross. "I'll bet I could have got by," he said. "I'll bet the *World* has a picture of the sick man in bed. They can't get a real one but they'll fake one. You've gotten us beat. Oh, well," he added finally, "perhaps you did your best. Write a good lively story about the milling crowd, the police, give a word picture of the sufferings of the sick man."

"The flies were pretty desperate," I said, "don't flies carry germs?" "Germs, my grandmother!" the city editor retorted, "this silly germ theory again! But put the flies

MY BOYHOOD IN A PARSONAGE
in if you like. Make it all good and sordid and vivid
—perhaps we'll get it on the front page."

But all that was three years after my brief essay in Albany journalism about which I started to speak. There one noon the city editor said, "Lamont, here's a snappy story. You go down to see Jim Murphy," a local Democratic ward leader associated in all sorts of public construction enterprises, most of them successful. "You ask Murphy whether the story is true that he bribed government inspectors at Watervliet Arsenal." "But, Mr. Johnson," I said, "that's an insulting question."

"Oh, no, you're too thin-skinned, he's used to that sort of thing—just ask him casual-like."

So with certain innocent misgivings, off I trotted to Mr. Murphy's office. I walked up to the railing behind which he sat comfortably at his roll-top desk. "Mr. Murphy," I addressed him politely, "the *Evening Journal* wants to know whether you bribed the government inspectors at Watervliet Arsenal."

Mr. Murphy swung around with a jerk. "What's that, young man?" he exclaimed. I repeated as off-handedly as I could: "The *Evening Journal* asks whether—"

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"Young man," shouted Mr. Murphy turning an angry purple, "you get the hell out of here—and damn quick, or I'll kick you out."

"All right, Mr. Murphy," I said placatingly as I turned to go. "The *Journal* only asked the question."

"You get out!" And Mr. Murphy leapt to his feet.

Back in the office I reported to Mr. Johnson. "It was just as I thought," I said. "Mr. Murphy was frightfully indignant: he can't be guilty."

"What did Murphy say?" the city editor inquired mildly. I told him the brief interview just as it happened.

"O.K.," said Mr. Johnson, "that's fine. Just write it all out exactly as you tell it and let me have it."

I wrote it out faithfully and handed it in, though I could see no point in it. But what was my horror, when the late edition of the *Evening Journal* came out, to see my story on the front page unchanged except for a brief introduction and with this flaming headline:

MURPHY DOES NOT DENY IT

DECLINES TO DECLARE HIS INNOCENCE WHEN *Evening Journal*

ASKS THE QUESTION

Wateroliet Arsenal Bribery Case Assumes Another Phase

There is a small sequel to my story. Twenty years rolled by and this same James Murphy had attained large means and become a power in various corporations. One day I was sitting at my desk as a vice president of the First National Bank of New York when in walked Mr. Murphy, asked to see me, sat down, and said benignly: "I have heard something of you, Mr. Lamont, and I want to invite you to become a director of such and such a corporation in which I am largely interested and to go on the executive committee."

It was an important industry, they kept a large account at the bank, and old Mr. George F. Baker, our chief, said for a young man it was an honor that I could not well refuse. I never reminded Mr. Murphy of our first interview and certainly he never recognized me as the fresh reporter of the *Albany Evening Journal* of twenty years or so before. I had never believed the Watervliet Arsenal story and later in that Albany summer when I had expressed to the city editor my continued conviction of Mr. Murphy's innocence, he said: "Oh, well, you know, he and Billy Barnes [William Barnes, Jr., the local Republican boss] were at daggers drawn. Mr. Barnes just wanted to touch him up a bit."

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The meager income that we reporters on the New York *Tribune* received could be augmented somewhat if we were lucky enough to turn up some subject that would be suitable for the Sunday edition. Of course that was long before the day of Sunday magazine sections, colored supplements, and even photographs. I had been at my job only a few weeks when I began to stir around and try to turn up something that could be written up and used as a "Sunday Special." First I wrote about one or two phases of old New York life, and of the Bowery which at that time was a spot that had its gangster dens and mysteries that could always be made intriguing for country readers. In my casual researches about early Manhattan I naturally was able to glean considerable material from that volume that still has its place in every collection of Americana, namely, *A History of New York* by Diedrich Knickerbocker, the name that Washington Irving, who was comparatively unknown at the time, had used as a *nom de plume*.

Then one sleepy August day when I had completed my afternoon assignment, and was hanging around the office until time came for me to go up and interview

Gentleman James J. Corbett at his fighting quarters (which is another story), I suddenly bethought me of a passing romance that my elder brother had once related to me. He was home on holiday from Harvard College and someone there had told him the tale. I do not know who was the author: perhaps he is so well known that I should blush to be ignorant of his name.

At any rate, the brief story had stuck in my mind and so, without further ado, I grabbed a sheaf of our yellowish copy paper and wrote it out just as it came back to mind. Then I slapped a couple of heads on it, marked it "Sunday Special," put on my initials, and turned it in to Ervin Wardman who had charge of "The Sunday." Wardman was later editor of the (long since defunct) *New York Press*, and at the time of his death twenty years ago or more had been for a long time the late Frank Munsey's right hand editorial man.

The next day I found my story in my letter box in the *Tribune* city room, with this brief legend scrawled across the first page by Mr. Wardman: "Mr. Lamont—Where did you get this story? Better, if it isn't known, made a magazine romance. It's a fine chance. Speak to me about it."

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Now the unexciting sequel is that apparently I never adopted Wardman's interesting suggestion, but being laid low about that time with a prolonged bout of typhoid fever, I put the short manuscript away. I never saw it again until the other day, when over half a century later, I was clearing up a lot of accumulated old papers and came across it, just as legible as it ever was on the old yellow sheets. So after all these years I reproduce it here, making my apologies to the (to me) unknown author and asking him to forgive my bald plagiarism. If the little romance has any interest now, it is due to the fact that World War II and its aftermath have brought once more into the limelight all the region of the Caucasus and the Black Sea, of the German occupation of Sevastopol, of its magnificent reconquest by the Russians.

Henry Spill

with TWL
plan
MC

A salute to the Brave Robert Lee
ag cap

The story of a young newspaper corres-
pondent at the Siege of Sevastopol

copy

~~Lee~~ Leonard Edwards,
(28) years old, was the war-
correspondent of the London
"Times" at Sevastopol during
the Crimean war. He had
done well in his work at
London and had considered
his mission to the Crimea
a direct advance. He was

the
place.
Spent 10 years
at the
Siege

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Sunday Special

TWL

Mr. Lamont—Where did you get this story? Better, if it isn't known, made a magazine romance. It's a fine chance. Speak to me about it.

A SALUTE TO THE BRAVE SOLDIER

THE STORY OF A YOUNG NEWS- PAPER CORRESPONDENT AT THE SIEGE OF SEVASTOPOL

Leonard Edwards, twenty-eight years old, was the war-correspondent of the London "Times" at Sevastopol during the Crimean war. He had done well in his work at London and had considered his mission to the Crimea a direct advance. He was ambitious for further success, and left nothing undone to win new glory for his newspaper and for himself.

During the long months of the siege, Edwards looked from the walls of the beleaguered city and saw the fleets of the great powers drawing nearer in an ever-narrowing circle. The British battleships led the way; the tri-color of France, for once in friendliness with her rival, waved close by; and the flags of Italy, with the crescent of Turkey, fluttered in the breezes on the right. Sevastopol's end was to be swift and sure: yet the Russian authorities within the city kept up hope.

At the beginning of the siege they had made the rule that no newspaper correspondents should send dispatches from the city without first submitting them to the

Russian military authorities. Only in this way could the Czar's men be sure that the secrets of their defence and the gradually weakening powers of the besieged were not made known to the enemy. The rule was well understood; for the penalty of its infringement had been announced as death.

One afternoon the Russian troops made a fierce sortie and were repulsed with great loss. Young Edwards saw that if he waited to submit his dispatches, as usual, to the commandant, the story of the bitter fight and the gallant effort of the Russians would not appear in the "Times" until the second day. To be sure, none of the other papers would have it before that time, but if Edwards sent his account without the usual delay, he would "beat" all the other dailies by twenty-four hours, and that would mean great favor and almost sure advancement for him. He decided to risk the danger.

The young correspondent was taken in the act of sending his dispatches, and was condemned to be shot at dawn on the following morning. As he lay in his dungeon beneath the governor's castle, the sound of music came floating in on the evening breeze. Edwards asked his jailer where the music came from, and the man answered that it was being played in the castle above, at the birthday ball of the governor's young and beautiful daughter.

The youthful prisoner, musing a moment, said that it was his last night on earth, and that he should like to spend it at the birthday ball. The jailer thought that a strange request, but he went and brought the governor himself to answer it. To him Edwards repeated his request, and gave his word of honor that he would not try to escape.

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The governor wonderingly granted him the favor and, providing him with the uniform of a lieutenant of the guards, took him to the ball-room. He led the young lieutenant to his daughter and presented him, saying that here was a young officer who, at daybreak, was to start on a difficult and dangerous mission, from which he might never return, and he asked the girl, radiant in her bright beauty, to be gracious to the young man.

She needed no second bidding. The pair danced together, many times during the evening, and the girl was gay and winning. Just as the grey of dawn was beginning to grow red in the East, the two found themselves, standing by an open window, almost deserted; for most of the guests had departed. At that moment the governor came up to them, and said to the lieutenant,—“Come, it is time you were off.”

The two said good-by, and, at parting, the governor's daughter gave Edwards her little lace handkerchief to keep as a remembrance of their happy evening.

Edwards was led down into the courtyard, hidden from the ball-room by an angle in the building, and he found there the file of soldiers drawn up in line, with muskets ready-loaded. He took his place in front of them, and himself gave the signal for firing, by dropping the little handkerchief.

The young girl, still standing by the open window, looked out on the reddening dawn.

“Listen!” she said, “they are firing a salute to the brave soldier as he starts on his journey!”

Postscript

Many scores of kind readers of this little volume have written me in more than generous terms in regard to it. A few have intimated a sense of disappointment that the book ended so "abruptly." True enough, it is a somewhat far cry from the Parsonage to a story of the Crimean War at the end, romantic as that tale may be. Others of these unknown correspondents, some of them clergymen, I think, have asked whether I could remember any of my father's favorite themes in the pulpit.

In consequence, my publishers have encouraged me to add, in this and in any future printings, these few paragraphs by way of postscript. Possibly they will serve to cover both the points that I have mentioned.

As to my father's sermons, I was like every other boy. I listened attentively enough for a time, but my mind was apt to be wandering far afield—to the brooks and meadows, to the next day's play, the swimming or the skating, or perhaps back to some favorite book that

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I might be reading. But I do recall one theme that my father often dwelt upon. That was that God is the Light of the World, quickening both seedtime and harvest and the spirit of man; that all our well-being and happiness, our kindly impulses, our generous deeds, are kindled by the radiance of that Light.

Father was fond too of repeating those solemn lines from the first chapter of Genesis: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. . . . He made the stars also. . . . God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth."

I can remember on wintry nights when the trees were bare of leaves, my father used to bundle us youngsters up and take us out on the porch to gaze at the stars. Those particular nights that I recall were at the parsonage in beautiful Saugerties, with the reflection of the stars twinkling on the river below us and the dim black outline of the Catskill Mountains looming up to the west. There, as our eyes swept the sky, were the Dipper hanging low, Orion the hunter topping the eastern horizon, and above it Taurus, higher up still the Pleiades. We would gaze at them all with a growing sense of the awe and mystery of the universe,

P O S T S C R I P T

and then perhaps with a shiver, would scamper inside again and up to bed with a thrill that was not altogether of this world.

I doubt whether in my later life I ever once gave thought to those starlit nights of my childhood. But they came back to me on a camping trip a few years before the war, with General Jan Christiaan Smuts in the vast Kruger Animal Preserve (almost as large as the whole of New England) in South Africa. Twilight would have suddenly vanished and the big yellow African moon would soon be peeping above the rim of the world. We would be sitting around a roaring campfire, with the solemn tom, tom, tom, of the Kaffir drums sounding through the night, the occasional roar of a hungry lion or the mocking laugh of the hyenas prowling along the banks of the sluggish river. And overhead in that marvellous star-spangled sky, with milky ways so vast that, like a great belt of diamond dust, they lightened all the heavens, the great Southern constellations wheeled their radiant measure across the firmament. The affairs of this world seemed remote and of little moment. It was the majestic march of the universe that held us enthralled, the troublous

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affairs of little men fading away into a dim and misty memory.—“What is man that Thou art mindful of him?”

And so, after more than half a century had rolled away, the life of the Parsonage came back to me once again.

November 14, 1946.

